APRIL 1956

COMMENTARY

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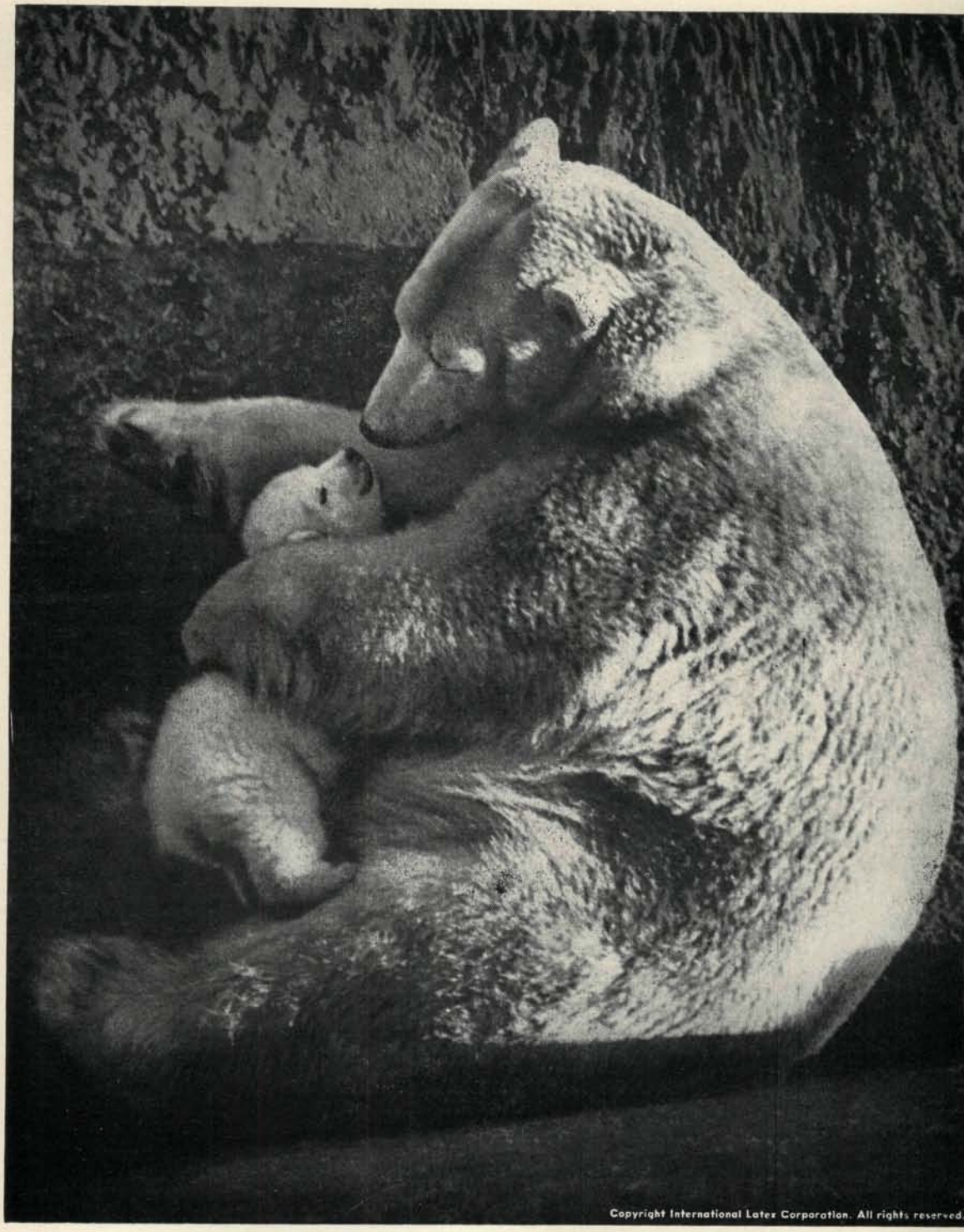

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Can Israel Defend Herself Unaided? *Hal Lehrman*

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A picture of the personality of the ex-President as it emerges from his recently published memoirs. By an editor of COMMENTARY.

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The northern prong of the great pincers movement (its southern prong is already well into Egypt) by which the Soviets hope to capture the Middle East has already penetrated far into Afghanistan, as this expert on Asiatic affairs shows.

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COMMENTARY

POUJADE: HITLER OR PIERROT?

First Postwar Mass Movement on the Right

HERBERT LUETHY

"POUJADOLF" was invented by a British cartoonist, Vicky. It will probably dog Pierre Poujade to the end of his days. The whole French left has clasped the expression to its bosom. The extreme right, which tends to sympathize with Poujade, retorted with rather strained plays on the name of Mendès-France, none of which was funny. All they did was provide more evidence of the anti-Semitic inclinations of the far right. Poujade himself only made things worse by declaring that he was neither an anti-Semite nor a xenophobe, but merely against "government by vagabonds," and that anyone with a voice in France's public affairs ought to be at least a third-generation French citizen.

I remember Jean-Paul Sartre, eight years ago over the radio, finding almost every feature of Hitler's face in General de Gaulle's—"except the forelock." Well, there were a few more differences than that, but "fascism" and "fascist" have become terms of everyday abuse in France which people instantly hurl at the first opponent in sight. (I believe the Communists started the fashion.) Certainly Poujade is guiltless of *looking* like Hitler. He has an essentially healthy, somewhat chubby, open face bespeaking average intelligence and belonging to a lively *homo aurignacensis,* a real southern Frenchman: "one of the boys" from head to foot. His appearance is not too unlike that of the young Maurice Thorez of pre-war days, who also looked like "one of the boys." How appearances can deceive!

IN FRANCE the most casual sort of criteria serve to identify individuals and groups as anti-republican, "hence" fascist. Of course, they have to belong to the right; for the purposes of current polemic, this is already enough to make a man a "fascist." But people with some intellectual scruples wait until a politician calls for "authority and order," and criticizes the parliamentary system, before they pin the label on him. "Leader worship" and "anti-parliamentarism" are indeed declarations of war against a republic solidly

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PIERRE POUJADE'S movement, swollen by its astonishing successes in the recent elections for France's National Assembly, has created alarm by its fascist overtones. HERBERT LUETHY, having kept an eye on the movement since its first emergence, tries to determine to what extent apprehension is justified. Mr. Luethy, who regularly reports on Continental affairs for COMMENTARY, is the author of *France Against Herself,* which was acclaimed by the critics on its publication over here last year. A native of Switzerland and a resident of Paris, he writes on literature, economic history, and a whole variety of subjects as well as on current politics. This article was translated from the German by Maurice J. Goldbloom.

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based on the principles of absolute parliamentarism and leaderlessness.

In the egalitarian Republic of France, parliament—ruling through changing committees called "ministries" or "executives" in which every politician is entitled to "have his turn"—is supreme. The chief concern of politics is to make sure that nobody stays on top too long. This accords with a way of thinking that sees freedom assured only by keeping a balance between contending factions. This almost feudal notion is echoed consciously in parliamentary jargon. The district from which a man hails is called his "fief," his constituents are his "clientele," and the local powers who "make" the election are called "electors." And there is the ritual formula by which any politician who agrees to form a government or take over a ministry must first "consult his friends." Only an occasional scandal disturbs this routine.

Of course, this way of running a country's affairs has never been altogether satisfactory. A more or less considerable body of France's citizenry, camped on the margins of her republican party system, has always refused to go along with it and clamored for "authority," "leadership," and "order." There have been the Royalists, the Bonapartists, the Boulangists, the anti-parliamentary leagues and the veterans' associations of the years between the wars, then after the war the Gaullists. Today, not quite hatched out yet, there are the Poujadists.

Paradoxically, the Republic *needs* its anti-democratic enemies, for it makes up for the fewness of its positive supporters by those many negative ones who are always ready to defend it against any and every "enemy on the right." The Republic never feels stronger, never is its conscience better, than when it can proclaim itself in danger: then the heroic hour of the Tennis Court Oath and of the republican *levée en masse* sounds again. In its normal functioning, however, the Republic enjoys scarcely any popular affection. Reading the French press, of whatever complexion, or listening to conversations in bistros, one is dismayed at the mixture of indifference and abysmal contempt with which parliament, government, and political parties are spoken of.

THERE is nothing new about this. In popular legend, the history of the Third Republic, and now of the Fourth, is one long tale of scandals never aired in court because of the secret solidarity of the politicians' guild and the subservience of police and judiciary. (Today, for instance, the ten years' war in Indo-China is rumored to have been nothing but a big currency swindle.)

It is strange how little French politicians themselves seem to be troubled by the popular feeling that "everything stinks"—a feeling only confirmed by the fact that not a beginning has been made at getting to the bottom of a single one of all the public scandals of the postwar period. No wonder the ordinary citizen seems equally ready to vote "left" for the Communists, "right" for the Poujadists, or not at all. And if he does end up by voting for one of the conventional parties, it doesn't necessarily signify approval; his vote may be based on some practical consideration, or simply on the resigned feeling that "even *that* is better than a dictatorship." To be sure, the left has traditionally claimed a monopoly on republican sentiment. Yet for the 5,400,000 French Communist voters, as for others, voting "left" has little to do with any concern for freedom and democracy. It does not mean voting for, but voting against—against the rich, against the priests, against the generals, against the Americans, against anyone and everyone. It means discontent and resentment.

Half a century ago Anatole France said: "The Republic governs badly, but defends itself well." When a dictatorship threatens, the French parliament suddenly loses its character as a mere "talk shop" and stands forth as the sole defender and guarantor of liberty. And it is able—and forced—to do so because it is in truth the only democratic institution possessing real powers in a country utterly devoid of regional freedoms or communal autonomy. Parliament, as the single and exclusive expression of the sovereign people's will, perches like an artificial head

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on top of a centralized administrative apparatus that has been inherited from the absolute monarchy, and a system of prefects responsible solely to Paris that has been inherited from Napoleon. All other French liberties exist on sufferance, their only guarantee the fact that the state machinery can be expected to be kept passive and impotent by parliamentary dissension. Were a cabinet to make uninhibited use of all the legal powers possessed by the national administration, liberty would vanish from every corner of France. Thus the Republic is, in effect, simply a negation—the absence of all effective government being the negation, in French eyes, of dictatorship. Drift and indecision on the one hand, authoritarian rule on the other—the French idea of the state seems to offer no third possibility.

BETWEEN parliamentary elections the French citizen has every opportunity to express his opinion, but none at all to make it effective. By the single act of casting his vote, he abdicates his sovereignty for a period of five years to the National Assembly. This is true in all matters from the most local and immediate to national, colonial, and international questions. It is obvious that this leaves his representatives the widest possible freedom of interpretation. Let him plump ever so emphatically for the extreme right or the extreme left, the parliament chosen by his vote has its own standards for deciding what he meant. Between elections, one and the same National Assembly will bring forth at least a dozen different governments, now left, now right, now piebald, and the "sovereign people" will have nothing whatever to say in the matter. Parliament has confiscated democracy for its own use.

Policy is made in the Palais Bourbon, and nowhere else. People outside this magic circle gabble about politics as freely as about the weather, and with just about as much effect. Of course, in the new elections at the end of the legislative term, the voter should be able to call his deputy to account. But even this isn't so easy. In the first place, the people are convinced that the deputies are all really "under one umbrella." And in fact the merry-go-round of new governments during the life of one legislature usually brings everybody into office at one time or another. The only deputies who can convince one that they are not under the "same umbrella" are those who, if they came to power, would do away with the Republic altogether.

Rhetorically, at least, the Republic is always in danger. Yet the capacity of France's parliamentary regime for surviving every threat to itself from inside the country is fantastic. The Gaullist episode gave new proof of this. In 1947 de Gaulle still wore the halo of liberator and restorer of the Republic. His prestige was so great that he wasn't the only one to think that all he had to do was give the signal and all France would rally round him. Using the old Boulangist slogans of "constitutional reform" and "dissolution of parliament," he campaigned against the "regime of impotence and decadence" and for a "strong state," a stable government, and an authority standing above the parties. At his first venture—in the politically insignificant general elections for the communal councils—he did in fact win almost 40 per cent of the vote. This, together with the 30 per cent won by the Communists, put all the parties loyal to the republican regime in a minority, but at the same time brought them together in a rather cozy "equality of danger." Then nothing more happened. The old parliament, chosen before the founding of the Gaullist Rally, sat on for another four years. When new elections finally came round in 1951, de Gaulle's "renovation movement" had been worn down to half its initial strength. (This decline was helped along by the adoption of new election rules favoring the center parties.)

It took another two years for what was left of the Gaullist parliamentary delegation to be completely absorbed and corrupted by what de Gaulle called "the games, the joys, and the poisons of the system." No other parliamentary group scrambled so eagerly for ministerial posts and portfolios. No one brought as much confusion, mendacity, and

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lack of dignity into parliament as did these Gaullist deputies in their feverish haste to make use of the period of grace left before the example of their "leader," who had long since taken leave of "his" deputies, would be followed by the voters. Thus for four years, a hundred deputies representing no party and no constituents at all played a decisive role in French politics.

In the 1956 elections General de Gaulle himself, having retired into his melancholy meditations on France's mission and fate, demonstratively stayed away from the polls. The voters who had once rallied from all quarters of the political compass to support him again scattered to the four winds—the Gaullist vote dropping to 4 per cent. Some shifted their allegiance to Pinay's conservative Independents. Some in the Paris area and in individual constituencies with a left-radical tradition supported Mendès-France and the Republican Front. Most of them, however, voted for a new standard bearer of anti-parliamentarism, Pierre Poujade. The 2,600,000 votes his movement got in the elections came from all sectors of that disoriented mass of floating voters whose convulsive changes of mind are one sure symptom of the French political malaise.

The starting point and stronghold of Poujadism is in "underdeveloped" southeast France, where, as it happens, de Gaulle was never strong. Here the discontented of all parties, including a considerable number of Communists (whose recent big gain of seats was due to the division of the center between "Mendèsists" and "Faurists," rather than to any actual increase in Communist votes), went over to Poujade as the loudest and most active malcontent. There would have been an even bigger Poujadist vote if all the pollsters and experts had not united, rather too eagerly, to deny that this movement of small tradesmen, loud-mouths, and illiterates, this "uprising of the unpoliticals," had a real chance. This error was the symptom of a state of mind blind to everything taking place outside official politics, and especially to what goes on among the little people in their market places and workshops.

Only Pinay's Independents, who appealed to the same voters as Poujade, smelled what was in the wind. The Independents' pressure for early elections was as much motivated by their concern over Poujade's rise and by a desire to steal his thunder, as by the domestic and international political situation; they were certainly much less afraid of Mendès-France. Only a month before the "precipitate" dissolution of parliament, the Poujadists had won an unexpected and complete victory in the voting for the chambers of commerce (not to be confused with the similarly named unofficial American organizations) of half of France, whose office-holders were accustomed to regard their posts as lifelong benefices. People who otherwise never voted did so this time, and it was enough to turn the chambers of commerce upside down.

POUJADISM is Gaullism's most important heir, and is nourished by the same instinctive popular reaction against the customs and usages of French parliamentarism which gave de Gaulle his following. But it would be difficult to find even the slightest similarity of style, origin, or mentality between the two "Fuehrers." Poujadism is not just the turbulent southern French variant of Gaullism; in many respects it is its sharpest antithesis. The belligerent stationery dealer of Saint-Ceré has seldom troubled his head about those notions of French power, greatness, and glory around which de Gaulle's thinking revolves. Having become a prominent politician overnight, Poujade has had to formulate or borrow halfway consistent attitudes on national and international affairs in all haste. The "strong state" was the alpha and omega of de Gaulle's program. Poujade won his prestige as a rebel and enemy of the state, as a man who threw tax-collectors into the street, twisted the noses of prefects, and insulted government ministers.

The difference in their regional origins signifies more than a difference in personal temperament: the two men are rooted in entirely different traditions. De Gaulle, the descendant of an old northern French family

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of officials and officers, was brought up in the traditions of absolute monarchy. Pierre Poujade is a half-declassed petty bourgeois from the Massif Central, the desolate "slum of France," an area always handled in stepmotherly fashion by the centralized state. The tradition he embodies is an entirely different one, but it has existed for centuries all over France, and especially in the mountains: the tradition of the *Jacquerie*—the revolt against taxation of the "little people" to whom the state has always looked like a robber baron.

In 1860, the Department of Lot, which is where Poujade comes from, had 300,000 inhabitants. In 1900, it had 240,000; in 1936, 162,000, and according to the last census, in 1954, 147,000. The eight departments of the Massif Central, to which the Poujade movement was confined until the fall of 1954, have lost approximately half their population in the past century. In two of them, Lozère and Creuse, the loss from 1936 to 1954 came to 17 and 14 per cent, respectively. Only in one, Puy-de-Dôme, does depopulation appear to have come to a halt.

Today, when the population of France as a whole is again starting to rise, the division of the country into two areas of entirely different development makes itself felt twice as strongly. On the one side, there is the industrial, prosperous, modern France of north of the Loire, which includes the Paris basin (whose population has over the last seventy years more than doubled, absorbing in each of the last two decades more than the total increase in the national population). Not only has there now been a sharp new rise in population in the heavy-industry areas of northern and northeastern France, but in recent years it has begun to rise in scattered departments of the Rhone, Alpine, and Pyrenees regions, where previous trends towards depopulation have been reversed by the effects of great electric power projects and a tendency, observable in all modern states, towards decentralization.

The "other France" remains excluded from modernization, from the transportation and market network centering on Paris, and from the new prosperity, and its decline continues unabated. This "other France" includes Brittany and its immediate borders—likewise a home of chronic *Jacquerie*—a chain of departments in the Alps, the Jura, and the Vosges, and above all the compact mass of the Massif Central and almost all of southwestern France south of the line of the Loire. There are thirty-eight departments in these regions where the loss of population continues unchecked. There, regional crafts have entirely died out or at best vegetate. There, cities are sleepy market towns, or at best small tourist centers. Agriculture, which employs 70 per cent of the working population, still proceeds under that wretched and archaic system (so prized by the romanticizers of "eternal France") which includes wooden plows, share-cropping, and a pastoral or two-field economy. In 1951 average per capita income of peasants in the Massif Central and southwestern France was estimated at $442, as against an average of $1510 for the Paris basin and the North. And the rapid mechanization of agriculture in northern France has probably increased this discrepancy since then.

The population decline in "backward" France is not accompanied by a commensurate drop in the number of economic units, whether businesses or farms. This, however, happens to be a normal phenomenon in declining areas. In places not entirely abandoned (there are more than a few in France) somebody always stays behind to carry on the inherited store, the paternal workshop, or the ancestral farm. Where a single enterprise no longer provides enough for a living, additional sources of income are sought. The shoemaker's wife runs a vegetable store, the innkeeper sells newspapers, the butcher runs a little hotel. And everybody tries to make a little during the tourist season by renting out a room or even his house. (The poor but lovely Massif Central has many health and vacation resorts; only they are not patronized by foreign tourists with money, but by thrifty vacationists from Paris and northern France.)

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For the most part, "trade and industry" in the Massif Central form a crazy-quilt. When the tax office asks proprietors for exact information about their incomes, it is often asking for more than they themselves know. The old joke about the tradesman who kept no books because if he did he would have had to declare himself bankrupt is an everyday reality here. No distinction is made by storekeepers between business and household funds, between their meager stocks in trade and what's in their kitchens and cellars. When business is bad they eat up their stock; when it turns better, they re-stock. Under war and inflation, this sort of existence was comparatively easy, and *pâté de fois gras* with truffles, the principal export product of the Lot department, was worth its weight in gold on the black market. By an unfortunate coincidence inflation came to an end just when more rigid tax audits were put into effect. In 1953, in accordance with his instructions, the tax collector in Cahors sent auditing squads out into the small towns of Quercy (the traditional name of the region of which the department of Lot forms part), and a revolt broke out. It was directed just as much against modern accountancy as against tax collectors.

The falsified tax return is an ancient and unchallenged right of the French petty bourgeoisie, and tax evasion is one of the conditions of their existence in the backward provinces. To threaten them with inventory checks, audits, and writs of execution is like threatening to put them out of business. Poujadism was born as an act of primitive self-defense.

Of course, a tax revolt is never a "solution." If the inhabitants of the Massif Central and the southwest were declared free from all taxes, it would not remedy their situation much. The French peasant lives practically tax-free anyhow; though he makes up close to 40 per cent of the population, he contributes less than 2 per cent of the national taxes. Turnover taxes from a department of northern France amount to over a hundred billion francs; in a department of the Massif Central they come to three billion. As long as the tax revolt and tax strike remained confined to this "slum of France," neither the government nor public opinion got very excited, the material loss being insignificant.

Of course, the Poujadists oversimplify when they say that "the state of the trusts and technocrats" has sworn the ruin of the small businessman. But the claim is not made out of thin air. All experts now agree that small business in France is overstaffed, and that the competitive capacity of French industry is diminished by the artificial preservation of obsolete small enterprises.

The entire French economy is burdened in any case by artificial preservation. Efforts are being made to eliminate it, but what is healthy for one France can be devastating for the other. Middlemen flourished parasitically in the years of war and inflation, and now their number must again be reduced to tolerable dimensions. But in southwestern France, the "overstaffing of trade and small industries" is the result, not of the inflation boom, but of the wasting away of the economy. And the alternative to the present way of life there is not change of occupation or modernization, but emigration to the industrial cities of northern France. Here in the heart of France, just as in North Africa, a great need for productive investments does not suffice to check—much less reverse—the accelerated flight of property and capital.

In its new state of relative stability and prosperity, the French economy shows a disquieting tendency to contract still further with each goal it achieves. Contraction and expansion go hand in hand. In the fashion not of the 20th but of the 19th century, the activity of the country concentrates itself in ever smaller areas while the provinces empty and the empire crumbles away.

POUJADE'S "movement of Saint-Ceré" has converted the legendary act of "popular solidarity over and above all parties" by which it was founded into a stirring symbol. One Frégeac, a carpenter and also a Communist town councillor of Saint-Ceré, called on Poujade, who was a Gaullist town councillor, to help him chase a tax auditor out of

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his, Frégeac's, workshop. Frégeac has remained Poujade's brother-in-arms ever since.

There is little talk of "order," or of the "power" and "authority" of the state, at Poujadist mass meetings. Rude abuse of the government and parliament, in general and in detail, prevails, along with jovial cries of "to the gallows," "to the lamppost," and "*mort!*" without which no proper mass meeting, whether of right or left, is conceivable in France. Hang the ministers, impale the deputies, slaughter the "big fellows" and the "fat boys"—this is the "little people" of France speaking from the heart.

Poujade's oft-cited anti-Semitism is stimulated neither by racism, nor even commercial envy, but rather by backwoods xenophobia. Xenophobia is not particular to small-town France, but in an underpopulated country that for three decades has been host to immigrants it can easily be stirred up against "vagabonds" of any origin—perhaps most of all against North Africans, who "inundate France" and then aren't even "grateful" to their host country. The Poujadist belligerence towards "half-Frenchmen" gets its special coloration from the fact that Poujade entered the national scene under Mendès-France's government, which had not only a Jew at its head, but as its minister in charge of taxation, an ex-Gaullist with the Germanic-sounding name of Ulver, "whose parents," according to Poujade, "are still searching themselves for fleas on the Danube."

Poujade's only genuine political "idea," taken out of an elementary school textbook but easy to popularize, is to "convene the Estates General"—as in 1789. It is typical of the political mentality of the whole provincial petty bourgeoisie of France that, after a century under a parliamentary republic, the thousand-armed monster of the French state is confronted with the same real sense of defenselessness and vassalage as the absolute monarchy was. Just as at that time, the "little people" would like to send delegations with lists of their complaints directly to the "sovereign," because their complaints don't penetrate to Paris.

But didn't Mendès-France himself, when he took over the leadership of the Radical Socialist party in 1954, announce "We are in the year 1788!" Saint-Ceré is not the only place in France where the clocks are slow.

THE unpolitical or anti-political phase of the "movement of Saint-Ceré" ended a year ago, when Poujade "marched on Paris" with his small tradesmen from the provinces. That was both climax and end of his movement's political innocence. The success it achieved at that time would have fully satisfied any merely economic pressure group. Parliament agreed, trembling, to a fragmentary *ad hoc* tax law granting small business a tax moratorium and abolishing the tightened tax audits. In other words, traditional tax evasion became legal again—though the real complaint of the Poujadists is against having to pay taxes at all. For the moment, the removal of some injustices and a tax reduction estimated at fifty billion francs a year took much of the wind out of the movement's sails. The threatened general tax strike by the middle class collapsed, Poujade went home, and Paris thought the specter was exorcised for good and all.

But Poujadism was merely changing its skin. Poujade's natural talents as an agitator and the *élan* of his movement, which was still largely undefined politically, could be used for larger ends, as the Communists recognized when they encouraged the Poujadists in the beginning—and the Communists continued to treat them with at least benevolent neutrality for a while after they had made themselves independent. Ambitious organizers and wily financial backers came from the "homeless right" who saw even more hope in Poujadism as a field of political activity. Since Vichy these elements had found no suitable place for themselves in French politics; only reluctantly had they marched behind de Gaulle. Now, alongside Poujade's Union for Defense, which was concerned only with fiscal reform, there arose a Poujadist political organization and a weekly, *Fraternité française*. "Cadre schools" were set up, the effectiveness of whose edu-

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cational work was demonstrated in the election campaign. Corporative "parallel organizations" were formed for peasants, workers, and the free professions. When parliament was dissolved and new elections held, these organizations were only in their first stages, and the Poujadists, taken unawares, had to hurriedly improvise their "joint lists," which is why the legality of some of their candidates' electoral victories is now open to parliamentary question.

So, in a parliament dominated by lawyers and teachers, sit twenty-three food dealers, fifteen artisans, a laundry owner, a druggist, a seed merchant, three small industrialists, and three "intellectuals" (some of them have been expelled in the meantime), all of them sworn to let themselves be hanged if they betray the "program of the Movement." That program still consists essentially in demands for fiscal reform and for the calling of the "Estates General." Helpless at first and inexperienced amid the subtle maneuvers of the parliamentary game, the Poujadist deputies very quickly found a parliamentary leader from outside their own ranks: an able lawyer and deputy named Tixier-Vignancour.

An authentic representative of the "parlor fascism" of pre-war days, Tixier-Vignancour had been in charge of Radio Vichy in 1940. After the war, he served as defense counsel in all the major trials for collaboration of the "Pétainists." He appeared in the last elections heading a new movement, the "Rassemblement national," that was attempting to revive the sort of thing Doriot stood for before the war, and which elected only three deputies.

Poujadism, without a leader, and "neo-fascism," without a following, found one another in the National Assembly. At the moment the large Poujadist bloc in parliament functions as a compliant appendage of Tixier-Vignancour's fascist grouplet, and the evolution of these small tradesmen strayed into parliament may very well turn out to be symbolic for the evolution of Poujade's entire movement. Richer in instincts than in political ideas, it has so far found in Pierre Poujade only a demagogue, not a political leader.

How can an authoritarian political movement be grafted on to an anarchistic tax revolt that lacks a precise program and even a "doctrine"? Well, many very respectable politicians in France get along quite well without that sort of baggage, and it is precisely the political indefiniteness of Poujadism, waiting and adapting itself to events and to the errors of its opponents, that is its most disturbing feature. At heart it has remained a last-ditch stand of provincials and shopkeepers against modernization, and somehow this has given it the solid organizational core that was lacking in pre-war anti-parliamentarism and postwar Gaullism. Poujadism's roots in the provinces and its schooling in spontaneous resistance to the power of the state are so many trumps. The movement forms a center around which other inchoate discontents and revolts can crystallize.

There is no lack of explosive material even outside the commercial middle class. Beneath unprecedented surface prosperity, the old French social structure is crumbling, and the social ferment has remained undiminished. The housing famine has scarcely been touched by showy constructions for millionaires and new barracks-like projects for the less affluent. Above all, the progressive collapse of the empire, which in Indo-China was still a distant and obscure tragedy, is in North Africa beginning to affect the living substance of France. "Defense of the Empire" is the most important new point that has been added to Poujade's program since his entrance into national politics. That the Poujadists, almost alone of all political groups in France, use the word "empire" rather than "French Union" or some other circumlocution, is already a whole program in itself.

It is only of anecdotal significance that Poujade has many connections with Algeria through his wife, who comes from there. But the combination of Poujadism and colonialism can be explosive. A dangerous reaction is inevitable when a regime permits inherited world power to slip piecemeal from the fingers of one-day governments, and undergoes an unbroken chain of defeats and limi-

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tations without batting an eyelash. A growing number of Frenchmen returned from overseas, many of them soldiers, feel that they were not only left in the lurch by the politicians of the mother country, but betrayed by being used as pawns in parliamentary intrigue. Here is the basis for a "stab-in-the-back" legend that, alas, is not entirely legendary.

There has been no lack of danger signals. Two years ago, at the time of Dienbienphu, volunteers going to Indo-China demonstrated in front of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, abusing Prime Minister Laniel to his face and boxing War Minister Pléven's ears. At about the same time Marshal Juin answered a summons from Laniel with the contemptuous statement that the state had first to exist before he could give an accounting to it. Among the demonstrators at the Arc de Triomphe was a law student, one La Pen, who is now spokesman of the Poujadist group in parliament. Another Poujadist deputy is former Police Commissioner Dides, who in 1954 aired those "secret documents" purporting to convict the Mendès-France government of treason.

TODAY Poujadism is on the point of capturing the mass of French settlers in Algeria, and thereby of stirring up violent resistance to the home government's "policy of capitulation." In Algeria Poujadism has the chance to find, among a million Frenchmen, not only a second "mass base," but also plenty of money to finance all sorts of campaigns against the "traitors in Paris." It is a strange amalgam. Logically, tax strikes in the mother country and "war to the knife" overseas don't go together. In entering this new field of agitation, Poujadism is perhaps making the decisive turn from its role as a nuisance to a party of civil war. Contemporary French politics is hypnotized by historic dates, but there was nothing laughable about the repetition in Algiers on February 6, 1956, of February 6, 1934—the day when right-wing extremists and veterans' groups rioted in front of the Chamber of Deputies. The rioting in Algeria, blown up into an attempted fascist putsch, became the starting point for the new Communist-Socialist-Radical "Popular Front against War and Fascism." Suddenly, everything returned to where it was twenty years ago: back to the street riots, the leagues, the militant veterans' organizations—and, on the other side, the beckonings of the Popular Front. Only the roles are somewhat differently distributed: now it is the Communists who do the beckoning and the others who do the hesitating. But now, as before, it is the extremists who lead the dance; the flirtations with civil war that filled the last pre-war and the first confused postwar years in France are ready to begin again. In the French National Assembly there now sit 152 Communists, 52 Poujadists, and three "neo-fascists." Together they form more than a third of the Assembly.

There are only two possible majorities, that of the Popular Front including the Communists, and that of the Center excluding the Communists. The first decision of the Socialists and Radicals, when they were called on to form a government, was to declare both combinations impossible. And though the Socialists and Radicals secretly wanted a center coalition, they systematically set all the switches in the direction of a Popular Front. It is true that they fear a Popular Front, but they fear it less than losing their standing as leftists.

With the battle cry, "left against right," Mendès-France's Republican Front fought the electoral campaign exclusively against the supporters of Faure's government. It was difficult, even with a microscope, to find any except a stylistic difference between the "dynamic program" of the Mendèsist "Jacobins" and the "opportunistic program" of Faure and the Popular Republicans. So anti-clericalism, the oldest weapon in the arsenal of *fin-de-siècle* radicalism, was once more wheeled out. Anti-clericalism has long been the only issue defining the French left as a whole, but also the only one for which it can gather no majority outside a Popular Front.

Today the government of the Republican Front, which entered the electoral campaign

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with the slogan "not a *sou*, not a man for Algeria," has to summon new troops and raise new taxes for the holding of that country. It is carrying out exactly the same "reactionary" policy against which it agitated in every campaign meeting before the elections. Traditionally, the policies of the right, when they become too unpopular, are carried out by the leaders of the left. The French Republic has by now used this formula too often, and one of the consequences is that the whole non-Communist left has become discredited. A few weeks have sufficed to destroy the new prestige which the Socialist party won in five years of opposition, and to make all the promises of its propaganda look like a swindle.

Political maneuvers may suffice to "put over" unpopular measures, as the war in Indo-China was "put over" for ten years. But in the face of France's North African tragedy, skill at parlor tricks is no longer enough. Algeria is a problem that can be settled only by a government that will take full responsibility for the sacrifices and the exertions, as well as for the concessions, now necessary. More riots and capitulations on the pattern of February 6, more setbacks and new troop levies for Algeria, without a way out or even a clearly proclaimed goal in sight, and that "Popular Front against Colonial War and Fascism" with which the men of the present government in France were toying in the past electoral campaign can become a reality against their will and through the "logic of the streets." And then "Poujadolf's" hour may strike, too.

The French equivalent of Hitler does not yet exist. Poujade, so far only an agitator, or someone else, a marshal or a civilian, must first hatch out into a "Fuehrer." But the possibility is very much in the air.

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FALL AND RISE OF A ZIONIST

"For Better or for Worse"

BENNO WEISER

AS SOON as the hour of Israel's birth struck I knew that I was going to settle there. I had always been a Zionist, and there was very little to tie me down where I was. Ten years before, I had bade a tearless farewell to Europe and found friendly shelter in one of the smaller South American countries, where, nevertheless, the stranger was doomed to remain a stranger. During the previous two years I had had no place of permanent residence, for I had been traveling through South America trying to enlist political support for the principle of a Jewish state and the partition of Palestine. I was a bachelor with no responsibilities. My *aliyah* seemed to be imminent, natural, and logical.

But before I could even start to think about it, I was sidetracked by a promotion. The head of the Jewish Agency department under whose direction I had worked in Latin America was drafted to a high position in the newly created Israeli Foreign Office, and I was called to New York to replace him. The acceptance of this assignment seemed no retreat from Israel. Rather, I considered it a bridge, and since my work brought me into close contact with the affairs of the new state and hundreds of its citizens, I had, for a long time, the feeling of living with one foot there.

After a while I began to fall for the charms of the United States in general and New York in particular. In addition, the second half of 1948 and the beginning of 1949 were certainly a most pleasant time to bask in Israel's glory—in New York. It was Israel's honeymoon; what was wrong with spending it abroad? There were the visits of high-ranking Israeli dignitaries, receptions, cocktail parties, mass meetings, dramatic sessions in the United Nations, the opportunity to approach on a more or less equal footing the diplomats who only a few months before had been doing you a favor when they received you standing in a corridor. It had become fun to be a Jew, even in the Diaspora, and especially when the Diaspora meant New York.

As time went on I slowly sensed that the postponement of my *aliyah* was by no means unwelcome to me. The more contact I had with Israelis the more conscious I became of the fact that, despite my lifelong association with Zionism, I was as little an Israeli as I had been a Latin American. I grew painfully aware that the hopeless fragments that had remained of several half-hearted attempts to learn Hebrew in my youth almost automatically made me an outsider whenever I was with a group of Israelis. Like all Zionists, I had always dreamed of a generation of proud Jews that a Jewish state would bring forth, but now the Israelis I met—whom I saw no longer through the eyes of a dreamy Zionist but from my position as an insecure outsider—seemed cocky, not proud. Moreover, it became clear to me that I who as a Zionist had always snubbed assimilation would have to undergo a difficult linguistic, social, cultural, and psychological assimilation in Israel. To wish to postpone this process was as normal an impulse as the wish

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THE vicissitudes which led BENNO WEISER finally to adopt Israeli citizenship began in Vienna, where he was born in 1914. He had completed his medical studies at the University of Vienna when the Anschluss occurred and he left Austria for Ecuador. There he became one of Latin America's most widely read columnists. At present he is employed by the Jewish Agency in New York. Another of his candid memoirs, "Unsentimental Journey to Vienna," appeared in our July 1955 issue.

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to postpone the start of a reducing diet or a visit to the dentist.

However, though I analyzed my motives almost cruelly, I knew that I would not find peace with myself unless I settled in Israel. Too much of my emotional life had been invested in that small country. Though I had lost my early spontaneous enthusiasm, I knew that I would follow the demands of sheer consistency, like an honorable man who has promised to marry a girl. I just was in no hurry to marry.

The few years which followed were Israel's most difficult ones, and during that time I saw the new state miss its first opportunity to get a sizable immigration from the West. Hundreds of tourists who went from Latin America to Israel passed through my office. I saw them go and saw them return. To the routine question, "How did you like it?" they usually answered with an "Oh, it's wonderful." But if the conversation continued long enough, so many "buts" would come up that it was hard to understand how their total could be "wonderful." Many were disappointed, and said so. Many others were disappointed, too, but without admitting it even to themselves. Some apparently went with the determination to see what they wanted to see, and they repeated propagandistic slogans, ignoring what they themselves had noticed. Among those visitors, mostly active Zionists from Latin America, there were many who had toyed with the idea of settling in Israel. With very few exceptions, they all returned convinced that their plans could not materialize.

I had the impression that many of the visitors had been better Zionists before they went. A few even withdrew temporarily, after their return, from Zionist activities. Watching them going and returning made me often feel the impulse to urge that Zionist tourists be kept out of Israel for a while: it was too early for them, perhaps; not everybody, I said to myself, had the maturity to see the woods instead of the trees.

The barometer fell even among the Zionists who stayed home. A certain melancholy set in. Now that the state had been established, they were disoriented. Many a Zionist felt slighted by the fact that the Israeli government—as unsentimental as all governments—was putting into the limelight non-Zionists, or even former anti-Zionists, who were now active on behalf of Israel. Some Zionists developed a tendency not only to be critical, but to relish the opportunity to point out the shortcomings of people in the government. It was difficult to live in the midst of this kind of carping gossip without being affected by it, all the more since it was not always malicious and some very venerable figures were among the sighers and nodders.

I FINALLY made my trip in 1951, when I was elected a delegate to the Zionist Congress scheduled to take place that year in Jerusalem. At a farewell party, I replied to a speech by the host by saying that I was a dangerous traveler because I was carrying a dream in my luggage and because few dreams could stand the light of day. But I promised to look at Israel with the love of a parent who, of course, would like his child to be a prodigy, but accepts it with all its shortcomings.

With these good intentions I flew to Israel, feeling sure that I would not repeat the mistakes of other travelers. I was not going to Israel starry-eyed. I would not expect the impossible. I knew about all the things that were wrong; therefore they would not shock me.

But there are things in life that cannot be forced. My first encounter with Israel was a failure. Whether it was Israel's or mine was beside the point. I cannot love what I do not like, and I disliked Israel.

I met the country in its worst hour. Mass immigration was in full swing, *tzenah*—the austerity program—was stifling, inflation was soaring, the black market a *conditio sine qua non*. Yesterday's heroes were making desperate efforts to earn modest livings; people talked of moral crisis, favoritism, administrative incompetence, and hopeless red tape. Since I was trying to see things as they actually were, I shunned official sightseeing and

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government officials. I spent a great deal of time with relatives and people whom I knew from my European and Latin American days.

There was, perhaps, a highly personal reason for some of my dislikes. I had been a refugee twice in my life, and now I was in a country that seemed one big refugee camp. While I understood their necessity, I was allergic to the crowdedness, the living conditions, not to speak of the *maabarot,* where the new immigrants were quartered. In addition, I spent most of my time with people who had been brought to Israel by circumstances, not out of idealism. They spoke of the government almost with hatred, and some even with longing for the good old days of the Mandate. I resented their talk, but it left its mark.

I had some boyhood friends who had achieved high positions in the government. They probably could have shown me the other side of the coin, but they were busy, hectic, nervous, and it seemed almost an imposition to appeal for their time on the score of old friendship. I had never been too fond of the high and the mighty, and had additional inhibitions vis-à-vis big shots whom I had known when they were not even a promise. Thus the circles in which I moved were mostly the disgruntled and dissatisfied, the uninspired and selfish, those people who could have coined the then current Israeli joke, "For two thousand years the Jewish people waited for a state of their own. To *us* it had to happen."

I had been warned that the cities did not represent the true spirit of Israel, but unfortunately this was the moment of the Mapai-Mapam crisis which led in some kibbutzim to civil war, in others to the transfer of settlers. One of my most depressing experiences was the visit to a kibbutz which my driver had chosen because he had a sister there. I had a pleasant chat with his sister's daughter, a lovely girl of about thirteen. After we left, the driver said sadly, "With you she spoke. Me she didn't even want to notice." Astonished, I asked why. He answered with a sigh, "Because I voted for Mapai. She was a Mapamnik."

In trying to recall the impressions composing the mosaic of my disillusionment, these are the memories that stand out. I came to Israel to admire. I came with humility, fully disposed to look up to the people who had put an end to two thousand years of Jewish martyrdom. But, as it happened, I was the object of *their* admiration because of my gum-soled shoes, batiste shirts, and gabardine suits. As a tourist I had dollars with which I could invite them to steak dinners such as had become a myth to them. I could buy chocolate produced in Israel but available only to tourists who had hard currency, and bring it as a gift when invited to someone's home. In the eyes of many I was a shrewd article who had managed to live abroad as a Zionist official without ever having suffered in Israel.

I resented the fact that my heroes had become beggars who lived on food parcels from abroad. As a Zionist I had always drawn a line between the philanthropic approach to Judaism and national self-sufficiency. Now the paradoxical had happened: the national ideal had triumphed, and in its hour of triumph the nation had become an object of charity. I resented a system—necessary or not—which humiliated my heroes, and made black-marketeers of one part of the population and black-market customers of the other.

I was disturbed by the gleam which the mention of traveling brought into the eyes of almost everyone I met. It seemed as if Utopia started at any point beyond Israel's borders, in any country where one could buy meat, fruit, milk, and clothing. Typical of that state of mind was the anecdote of the Israeli child visiting Holland, seeing store windows filled with articles of food, and asking, "Mommy, doesn't Holland have a government?" The scarcity made food the main topic of conversation. When invited somewhere for dinner one had the choking sensation that one's hosts, in order to put up a show, were probably sacrificing a week's or, in certain instances, a whole month's rations.

A man who goes on a reducing diet from time to time knows very well the change of

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mood he experiences during the first days. He becomes snappy, rough, and aggressive. That was exactly the picture I got of the average Israeli in those days. The stranger in the street seemed much less a brother to me than a fellow Jew would in any other part of the world. The intake of calories, I thought with a shrug, was probably too small to produce human warmth.

These negative impressions, which to a great extent were consequences of a peculiar moment in Israel's short history, contaminated everything I touched. Before, I had sighed frequently over the difficulties of Hebrew, but had blamed myself for my slow progress; once there, I had consoled myself, I would manage to speak. Now I became resentful of Hebrew and blamed the language. Hebrew suddenly seemed to be not a Semitic language but a highly anti-Semitic one. Not only were nouns and adjectives masculine and feminine, but also numbers and verbs. If this were not difficult enough, the masculine numbers had feminine endings and vice versa, and the nouns were full of irregularities such as masculine words with feminine endings, feminine words with masculine endings, masculine words with masculine endings in the singular and feminine endings in the plural, and vice versa. I was angry at Hebrew. It seemed to me archaic and over-sexed. Perhaps the first explained the second. After all, compared with Biblical days, modern society was chaste and puritanical.

There I was in what was supposed to be my homeland because two thousand years ago it had been the home of my ancestors. There I was fighting with a language which was supposed to be my language because, thousands of years before, my ancestors had spoken it—when they weren't speaking Aramaic, that is—and there I met at every turn people who were supposed to be my people because we had some ancestors in common, but who came from all quarters of the globe, pigmented differently by different climates, speaking some sixty different languages, and bringing the cultures (or lack of culture) of seventy different countries.

Walking alone on a Sabbath eve on the crowded beach promenade of Tel Aviv, seeing the strange faces and hearing the Arabic and guttural French, I frequently asked whether I had ever felt as strange in any other place—and I had been in many exotic places. Before I had set foot on Israeli soil I had never doubted Herzl's saying, "We are one people, *one* people." Now I felt doubts and wondered what Herzl would have said had he ever met any Falashas or Libyan Jews.

In contending with Nazis and anti-Semites I had spoken and written so much about Einstein and Freud, Spinoza and Ehrlich, that I had come, by a certain *deformation professionelle* to see in every Jew a slumbering genius that, for one reason or another, just had not had a chance to make itself manifest. I found genius not only in achievements of the spirit—the making of money also required it, the eternal adaptation to new environments, the frequent changes from one occupation to another, the assimilation of new languages, the integration in new cultures—all this was for me proof of the genius of my people. But now I met Jews in whom, with the best will, I could not detect the hidden genius: Jews like the lemonade peddlers and corn-on-the-cob sellers of Tel Aviv and the incredibly slow post office employees of Jerusalem. By God, I was no snob! I certainly had nothing against Jews performing menial work, but I faced thousands of people who reminded me of Latin American *cholos* or *mestizos*. I certainly was no racist and I had nothing against *cholos* or *mestizos* when I met them in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, or Mexico, but now they were my people, my brothers, my *landsleit*. Naturally I knew that somewhere one would find a Professor Zondek, a Martin Buber, a Max Brod, but they were "somewhere," whereas the others were all over the streets, standing, walking, very much in one's eye.

This was the country of which I had thought in idealistic terms for many years. But what had the cafés lining the Tel Aviv shoreline to do with my ideal? Of course, I had nothing against cafés, and I even walked

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straight into one, where I found young people dancing not the hora, but rumba and conga to the music of—that was all I needed! —a third-rate Cuban band. *"La ultima noche que pasé contigo, quisiera olvidarte, pero no he podido"*—was this Zionism? Where was Bialik? Who could tell me that the young man dancing cheek to cheek with the buxom soldier girl was whispering commentaries on Ahad Ha'am's "On the Parting of the Ways"?

PEOPLE were, as I have said, critical of the government. I discounted those whose dissatisfaction was based on party lines. But there was a layer of irony which crossed party divisions and called into doubt the very competence of the government. There was an almost Kismet-like resignation to administrative chaos, the sluggishness of minor officials, the arrogance of new bureaucrats. It suddenly struck me that anti-Semitism had had its compensations. In Europe, there had been a common tendency among Jews to blame many of their failures on anti-Semitism. If one's request was turned down by an official, one would shrug it off with "Dirty Nazi!" and come to the conclusion once again that one was a Jew, and derive from the experience a new impulse to be a Zionist. But the Jews of Israel who got the brush-off from an official had no escape. The result was cynicism and a growing resentment of everything connected with a government that had brought down upon the country inflation, black market, controls, rationing, *protektzia*, fish filet, exit permits, shirt coupons, ice shortages, and standing in line—the ten modern plagues.

Disappointed as I was, I was prone to find fault with everything. I had seen thousands of photographs glamorizing Eretz Israel. Now it was summer; the intermittent patches of greenery were being parched by a merciless sun, and I was resentful of the propagandists and public-relations specialists who had made my eyes expect different things. The land was covered with the heartbreaking shanty towns of the *maabarot*. I liked Jerusalem, but scrupulously avoided its downtown areas, which were full of Oriental Israelis who sat around on the ground or stood lazily on street corners. I found Haifa beautiful and Tel Aviv depressing. I remembered Arthur Koestler's description of Tel Aviv. Its builders, it seemed, had never seen a modern Western city.

It was an election year and mud-slinging befouled the air. But the petty local squabbles of Mapai, Mapam, General Zionists, and a dozen other political groups did not interest me. After a while I felt not only less a Zionist, but also less a Jew. During sleepless nights to which the summer climate of Tel Aviv made its contribution, I asked myself whether I had not been trapped by my ideology. For the first time in my life, I wondered whether I hadn't perhaps, overstressed the importance of my being a Jew (though, of course, I lived in a period when one could hardly overstress it). Now that I felt myself a stranger toward so many Jews, I tended to put a halo around my friendships with Gentiles and to think that if my relations with them had remained superficial, it was partly because I myself had not wanted it otherwise.

But in more sober moments I remembered that those who had tried assimilation had failed. The tragedy of German Jewry was still fresh. And I knew that Zionism had rewarded me richly in the past. It had been the backbone of my life. So I consoled myself with Decatur's old slogan of "my country right or wrong." In any event, it was too late to change: I had invested my whole ideological life in Zionism. It was too deeply rooted in me to allow room for anything else, and anyway what was there in those days worth assimilating to?

Israel did not look beautiful to me, but the world of 1951 was even less beautiful. The Jewish state had solved the problem of Jewish homelessness, and had given the Jews of the Diaspora a new pride and self-confidence. It was important to make sure that the house built with so much pain and suffering should not collapse. But it filled me with envy to think that while Jews in America were luxuriating in the dividends of Israel's existence, I would be living there in

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wretched squalor. Life was so short! Twice fate had made me a refugee. Should I now give up the comforts and opportunities of the Western Hemisphere?

As time went on, a creeping claustrophobia came over me which was aggravated by the difficulties Israeli citizens had in obtaining exit permits and the foreign exchange necessary for travel. The most envied men in Israel were not those who had high positions or good salaries (with which, in those days, very little could be bought), but those who could travel. Even very important people in high positions would accept unpleasant fund-raising jobs because they involved a trip abroad. The young state seemed to me not so much a country as a floating island whose inhabitants had to charge their batteries elsewhere from time to time.

None of this, of course, was conducive to *aliyah*. Nor were the many other controls: of prices, food, exports, imports, currency, and correspondence—which latter was subject to censorship. Israel was suffering from acute statism. An immigrant from the West had quite a few liberties to surrender. As someone observed, in 1948 Israelis would ask visiting Jews, "Why don't you stay?" but in 1951 they were liable to ask, "Why should you stay?"

There were apologists, of course, plenty of them. Their perennial argument was, "What do you want? The state is only three years old." They could not convince me. A child that grew up with bowlegs could not be cured of them later on.

If, in spite of all this, I left Israel with some regret, it was altogether without remorse. I had settled accounts with my conscience. As the country disappeared under my plane, I felt neither sadness nor relief, but only emptiness.

WHEN I returned to my work in New York a peculiar after-effect set in. My original Zionist dream of Palestine began after a while to insinuate itself into and color my album of Israel impressions. A part of reality was replaced; a part of the dream re-emerged. I was not through with the dream. I sought out the company of Israelis. Trying to eliminate one stumbling block, I made an honest effort to learn Hebrew. I tried to re-evaluate my impressions from new and different angles. Was my experience the fault of Israel? A Shavian epigram popped into my mind, "There are two major tragedies in human life: one is not to reach one's heart's desire, the other to reach it." So it was not just a question of Zionism! Other people must have experienced similar let-downs with other ideals.

What did I want of Israel? Why should Israel alone be perfect? Why should I make those demands of a little country miraculously born and struggling against incredible odds? Was it fair to expect that the Jewish genius should manifest itself so quickly in Israel, where even a part of the old Yishuv, not to speak of the post-1948 immigration, consisted of people who, because of halutzism, or refugeeism, or years in concentration camps, had not had the time for thorough education?

Slowly, the suspicion dawned on me that my refusal to accept imperfection in Israel was partly the result of my wish not to settle there and that my feelings of guilt were finding their escape in criticism that was partly justified and yet partly wanton. This, I think, is an experience shared by many serious Zionists who stay in the Diaspora.

I also recognized that there was an ambivalence in my attitude toward Israel's leaders. I felt superior to many because they appeared provincial and unsophisticated, but at the same time I felt inferior and envious because they seemed so securely rooted in the country and its way of life. While I had been dreaming they had been doing; while I had made speeches they had built; whatever I had done for Zionism had been in safety and without personal sacrifice; they had been exposed to all the risks and had survived the War of Liberation. The only way I had been able to balance this unequal equation was to harp on their errors. The onlooker makes no mistakes.

In the meantime, the news from Israel began to improve. It became evident that

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things were changing for the better. *Tzenah* and controls were on the way out. Living conditions were improving. Nevertheless, in planning for a second trip in 1954 I resolved to return without any illusions, and to look at things with the new understanding I had acquired.

But my new insight had become irrelevant in the interval. While I was changing, the country had not stood still either. It had grown. It had become greener. Mass immigration had come to an end and those strange creatures of three years ago had been absorbed into the lifestream of the nation. The tent and shack cities had disappeared, replaced by thousands of new houses. Now that the immigrants had their own homes, they no longer gathered in clusters on the street corners. They worked, they earned a living, and they were neatly if modestly dressed. The faces of misery they presented to the world three years ago now looked more self-confident and inspired more confidence. They no longer seemed so strange, now that I could speak with them—they too had learned Hebrew. They spoke it with every possible accent—guttural, nasal, with a singsong—but they spoke it.

Now I found that some of the Orientals were picturesque, many well-built, others handsome. They had not Levantinized the country. The country had Westernized them. Many wore the khaki uniform of the army. I enjoyed giving soldiers a lift in my car. Five passengers—five ex-nationalities. Their parents were from different worlds; they, the sons, were Israelis. School did it; the youth movements and the para-military youth organization, Gadna, did it. The army did it. I had heard before that Israel was not a melting pot but a pressure cooker. True, my hitch-hiking soldiers still did not speak of Ahad Ha'am, but when they sang "Domino" it was in Hebrew.

Experiencing a different Israel in a different mood, I came to understand more clearly why my earlier trip had been a disappointment. I recognized that I had, of course, been a snob. Coming from the Diaspora, where one tends to watch each fellow Jew apprehensively, I had wanted to be proud of every single Israeli. Though it was my aim as a Zionist to help create a normal people with a normal social structure, a people like all other peoples, I now realized that I had not been entirely sincere on this point. I had wanted every Israeli to be something special. I had been shocked by every Israeli who was not an idealist. I, who didn't mind at all when Jews in other countries dedicated their lives to making money, had looked askance at Israel's rich. In other places I had accepted selfishness as a human trait. In Israel I had loathed every expression of it. I had probably wanted Israel to be the showcase that would redeem Jews all over the world from the prejudices against them.

There had also been snobbery and prejudice in my attitude to Israel's labor movement. My years in the United States, where workers are not class-conscious—and can afford not to be—had prejudiced me against parties that used terms like "proletariat" and *"Klassenkampf."* I still wasn't happy about the preeminence of these parties, but I recognized its historical justice. The labor movement had been the chief builder of the state. It had proved that Jews could earn their bread by sweat. It was precisely the unsophisticated Israeli worker and peasant who were achieving the "normality" that Zionism had aimed at. Perspiration was outweighing inspiration. Here was a nation being created more by stubbornness than by talent, more by steadfastness than by genius. Mediocre people who, under different circumstanecs and in other latitudes, would have never dared or cared to enter politics were carrying on politics here, running around, talking, making speeches, attending meetings, polemicizing, *"schwitzing,"** and helping in general to turn the wheels of government.

Theodor Herzl, in his utopian *Altneuland,* visualized the Jewish state as a kind of

*This word, which is used so much in Israel, was taken over from Yiddish. It is a mixture of the German *schwatzen,* meaning babbling, and *schwitzen,* meaning perspiring. The connotation is to simulate activity with a lot of talk.

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Vienna. I had made a similar mistake. I had dreamed in terms of my comfortable and sophisticated surroundings—but the comfortable and the sophisticated usually don't pick themselves up to go into the wilderness and found a state. The humiliated and the offended of a whole world had come together in Israel. I had resented the ugliness of their poverty. I had known what they had gone through and where they were coming from, but my understanding had been dimmed by my desire for the photogenic. I had also, that first time, come straight from the United States, where plain people do not dress too differently from the rich. The change had been too abrupt.

And I understood now that what had disturbed me most in 1951 was my first real contact with the "Jewish masses" to which one used to refer in speeches or articles; that underneath my distaste had lain an aversion for masses in general, because somehow I associated them with mobs, and mobs with anti-Semitism. Now, with my changed attitude, I met masses and mobs that, far from threatening my security, assured it.

I remember my feelings while watching a scene on a street in Haifa. Some fifty youths were jumping from an army truck. Their red berets indicated that they were parachutists. Their faces betrayed all shades of color, the bronze of the sunburned Ashkenazi, the olive of the Yemenite, and the dark brown of the Tripolitanian. They had bold faces, some with fantastic mustaches, some with piercing eyes. In any other country I would have been a little wary of such types. Here they meant protection. I thought of the general who said, "If my soldiers frightened the enemy as much as they frighten me I would be satisfied." I looked at those faces and was satisfied. I knew these were the same faces that three years ago had seemed strange and exotic to me, and thought: tomorrow you, you, or you there, might die for me at the border.

A few army girls came from the other direction. They were not precisely the prettiest ones. In dresses they would perhaps have appeared a bit too plump, but in their uniforms they looked smart, and their stockiness transmitted an impression of solidity. They were young, eighteen maybe, or nineteen. Through their physical robustness came the delicate fragrance of their youth, of awakening femininity. I thought of what girls their age would be doing in other places. It seemed to me at that moment that these girls were healthier than any I had seen before.

A Jew in a kaftan passed by. Anywhere else he might have hesitated instinctively at the sight of such a group, but here he passed by quietly and securely. I looked at this corner in Haifa, and I felt a new sentiment surging up in me. I no longer took refuge in "my country right or wrong." I embraced all those unknown people with understanding and loving eyes and said to myself, "My country."

One had, also, to see everything against the background of the difficulties. People in other countries might be digging for oil, here they were digging for water. Conscious of the value of water, I found myself turning off the faucets while shaving. "It's Jewish water," I said to a friend who was intrigued by my economy. There were many jokes in bygone years about the Zionist tourists who stood in awe before a "Jewish" cow. Well, I now became extremely solicitous about Jewish water, Jewish electricity, and other such Judaica.

Love came and grew. Love for the people, even those who were not photogenic, sympathy for the backward and almost illiterate Jews who were not those of whom Herzl had dreamed or whom I had wished to find, but who were doing the job of building a Jewish state. The Yemenites, who were the favorite colored Jews, had turned out to be excellent human material. And not only the Yemenites. Young Iraqis made good employees in banking and public services, and were gifted teachers. Tripolitanians were building up a carpet industry aiming at export to America. Moroccans, some of them very handsome, proved energetic and incorruptible traffic cops, adding in their smart

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uniforms a dash of charm to their unpopular jobs.

There was also a noticeable change in the general attitude toward the government. It had earned the respect of its citizens. It had achieved Israel's survival, a marked improvement in the economic field, an end to the chaos, an easing of the controls, a stable currency, an impressive increase in production. Life was still hard, but an easier and better one was no longer out of the question.

I recognized that even the best metaphor could be misleading. The bowed legs of a child may be beyond repair, but the mistakes of a state are not necessarily so. This time I spent many hours with ranking government officials. Now that I watched them without jealousy or competitiveness I frequently came to admire their spirit. They held the most responsible jobs on what seemed very low salaries, living on advances, loans, and supplementary income from extra jobs. Perhaps some of them had been a bit megalomaniacal in the beginning, drunk with their new power. They might have been too demanding in their contacts with citizens. But how little they asked for themselves! The country's progress was their main compensation; a salary was just one of those things without which one cannot do but which really did not matter. I never had been against capitalism, but I couldn't help feeling that there was something healthy in a society where money did not have undue importance.

My heroes were no longer beggars. They had recovered their dignity. Now that everything was available—though not within the reach of everyone's means—food had again become a question of nourishment and stopped being a topic of conversation. Gayety, laughter, cosiness, and appetite for life had returned. Gracious living was still nobody's full-time occupation, but many of my acquaintances had managed to move into tastefully decorated new homes with cheerful little gardens. It was no longer Sparta.

There were still many problems. The borders were tense, but an impressive army had been built up. The leftists were continuing their squabbles, but the kibbutzim were holding their own. Immigration had come to a standstill, and the pause was giving the country a chance to catch its breath and start creating conditions that might ultimately tempt Jews from Western countries to settle there. Political passions still ran too high and tolerance for the other fellow's views left much to be desired. But there were hardly a dozen countries in the world where democracy seemed more firmly entrenched.

Nobody is a hero to his valet. If the 20th-century Maccabees had turned out differently on a close view from what I had expected from afar, the fault had been mine or that of circumstance, but not theirs. Heroes are usually people whom fate puts into the right place at the right time, and who then do the expected. Save in such moments, they are as ordinary people, with ordinary weaknesses, longings, and cravings. People in other places dream of big cars, mink coats, or expensive jewels. The Israelis dreamed, more sensibly perhaps, of traveling. Why had I been frightened by their "wanderlust"? People all over the world want to travel, so why should they, living in a country of eight thousand square miles, stay put all the time? And why shouldn't they be overwhelmed when visiting America? How unfair it had been to think of Israelis whom I met abroad or who were about to go abroad as children playing hooky! Was it right to expect making history to be their full-time job? Weren't they entitled to the joys of life as much as anyone else, and maybe even a bit more?

Even the fact that there was emigration from Israel ceased to alarm me. Besides those to whom Palestine and, later, Israel had meant no more than a place of mere refuge, there were others who had come with an ideal, but whose idealism had been worn down by years of hard living, fighting, and frustration. If they now wanted an easier life in another country, what did that prove? Didn't people emigrate from older countries, where they had been born and where their ancestors had lived, in order to improve their lot? Why hold it against the in-

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habitants of Israel, descendants of a people whose specialty throughout the ages had not exactly been rootedness? There was the joke about the boatload of immigrants from the West arriving in Haifa and passing a boat of emigrants sailing out. The passengers of each shouted to those of the other, *"Meshugge?"* Perhaps neither were *meshugge*. The emigrants had had their fill of troubles. The new immigrants would have to face far less. They would arrive after the inflation, after the austerity program, and after many things that had made new poor of a considerable number of Israelis.

There was still the question of what the immigrant from the West had to give up, what he would get for it, and whether it would be worth it. This remained, of course, a highly individual matter. It was not precisely a question of *joie de vivre* versus idealism. Was "good living" really the answer to all human cravings?

Circumstances had made me a "rootless cosmopolite." I had made the best of it, but now I felt that, though being a rootless cosmopolite was not a crime, the Communists to the contrary notwithstanding, it meant giving up something essential in life. Love for a country is probably as necessary for a full life as romantic love. Slowly, I fell into the Israeli habit of saying, not "The country exports thirty-five million dollars worth of citrus fruits," but "We export thirty-five million," and so on. I abandoned the lofty attitude of the blasé world traveler whom nothing could impress. Yes, I had heard the Verdi *Requiem* before, but hearing it performed in Tel Aviv by a one-hundred-and-twenty-piece orchestra with a choir of one hundred voices meant something else. Sitting among the diplomatic representatives of several Latin American nations, many of which, though in existence for more than a century, could not afford to put on such a performance, I felt proud. I also felt proud to be part of a creative nation that did not take anything for granted, whether it was the desert, the aridity, or the course of its rivers.

YES, I had seen and heard many things in other places, but putting the little possessive pronoun "my" or "our" in front of them made a difference and provided a new intimacy. I felt that, though I had lived in many friendly ports throughout my life, I had missed something substantial by not living in that dimension which the possessive pronoun provides. The world was open to me and many a place was tempting. But in other countries my presence would add nothing and my absence take away nothing. In Israel it could make a difference.

It was too late for me to be a Mayflower Israeli, but when future Jewish generations looked back at us as we look back at the Maccabees, the few years' delay in my arrival wouldn't matter. If there were still faults and problems, all the better. They offer challenges to the newcomer and the gratification of not having jumped on the bandwagon of success.

Again I left Israel, but I left it as an Israeli citizen, determined to return as soon as my duties permitted. People who know my way of life seem astonished when I tell them that I am going to settle in Israel. Somehow settlers from the free world have become more of a rarity since Israel's establishment. "You mean for good?" my friends usually ask.

I reply: "For better or for worse."

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THE ANATOMY OF CONGRESS

Where Is the Nation's Majority Party?

SAMUEL LUBELL

CONGRESS has often been attacked as a veritable "house of misrepresentatives." Its members are widely portrayed as being concerned primarily with local interests or with obstructing whoever happens to be President. Because of the overrepresentation of rural areas and the seniority system through which committee chairmen are selected, it is often contended that Congress as a whole fails to reflect the true popular will.

Congress is what it is primarily because that is what the American people are like. This holds true not only in the sense that individual Congressmen are typical of the average run of our citizenry. Beyond that, it is really our own weaknesses and strengths, extremism and moderation, which give shape to Congressional decision and indecision. A seat-by-seat study of the make-up of Congress shows that in recent years at least it has become far more sensitive to national issues than most people realize.

Similarly, although Congress and the Presidency have played deadlock with one another since 1938, today's struggle between the White House and Capitol Hill is a very different affair from the old stalemate of Roosevelt's time.

One reason why these changes have gone unrecognized, I suspect, is that the dynamics of voting for Congress have not received anything like the attention that has been given Presidential voting. For my own part I never fully appreciated how vastly different the two voting processes were until the 1954 campaign, when I tried to penetrate into how people picked their Congressmen. The results of my talks with several thousand voters were something of a revelation.

AS MIGHT be expected, I found that most people do not even know the names of their Congressional candidates.

Most people, including many who protest stoutly that they always "go for the best man," simply vote the party label to which they are predisposed, and it is through such party voting that the predominant political trends in the country get registered. But many other persons try hard to form considered judgments on the candidates. Others assert their independence by clutching at even the smallest straw of identification which makes them feel they "know" one of the candidates.

People justified their preference for a particular candidate with remarks like these: "I shook hands with him at an American Legion meeting"; "I've seen his name on more billboards. I never even heard of the man running against him."

Other things being equal, the Congressman in office enjoys a considerable advantage in that he usually is better known than his opponent. Often, in fact, "maverick" legislators appear whose following cuts across both parties and who get reelected repeatedly regardless of the trend in the country.

LAST month, in "The Return of Two-Party Politics," SAMUEL LUBELL showed how the moderate elements in the nation have refused to cast their lot permanently with either party. Now he shows how closely this situation is reflected in Congress, where political control changes hands with almost every major election. Mr. Lubell, who was educated at the City College of New York and the Columbia School of Journalism, is a free-lance writer for the newspapers and magazines, and the author of the widely acclaimed *The Future of American Politics* (1952). The present article, like his previous one, is drawn from his book *Revolt of the Moderates*, which Harper will bring out this month. (Copyright © 1956 by Samuel Lubell.)

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Some of these mavericks rely on personal charm. At other times a man may run under one party label and then defy everything ordinarily associated with that party. While in Congress, for example, Jacob Javits, although a Republican, voted identically with New York Democrats on most issues. When Javits stepped out of Congress to run for Attorney General in New York State, his district voted 67 per cent Democratic.

Still, the bulk of the voting for Congress is governed by the party trend. And that brings us to what makes present-day relations between Congress and the President so unusual—and disturbing. For since the end of World War II there really has been no dominant or sustained trend in favor of either the Democrats or Republicans.

One effect, of course, was seen in the 1954 election, which gave the Democrats control of Congress while a Republican tenanted the White House. Herbert Hoover, after 1930, and Woodrow Wilson, after 1918, also had to grapple with hostile legislatures. In both these instances, though, unified party control of the Presidency and Congress was reestablished at the next election to continue for a considerable time. In recent years, party control of Congress was also lost by Truman after 1946.

Twice before in our history we have undergone the ordeal of prolonged periods of divided government. For the twenty years preceding the Civil War, and again for the twenty-two years from 1874 to 1896, no President had the support of a Congress of his own party through his complete term. Both these periods were remarkably like our own in one respect—they were years during which political loyalties were being reshuffled and neither party held a decisive majority. Once the forces of realignment had completed their task and one party emerged as the undisputed majority in the country, it had no trouble commanding both approaches to Pennsylvania Avenue. But while the voters tossed in restless transition, control of the government remained divided and shifted from election to election.

This historical pattern suggests that a new, third dimension needs to be added to our thinking about what governs the balance of power between the White House and Capitol Hill. Most students of history agree that this balance is determined primarily by how "strong" a character the President is or by how critical are the times. But our history has been marked by the alternation of not only strong and weak Presidents, times of crisis and relaxation, but of divided and united government, reflecting the absence or presence of a clear-cut party majority.

In the light of this, the usual solutions which are trotted out when the going in Washington gets tough will hardly meet our need. Some persons will continue to cry, "We must have a strong man in the White House," or "Congress needs reorganizing" to reflect the will of the public. And yet the root fault will lie with the people themselves, in why they refuse to choose decisively between the parties. At least two broad segments of the population—the farmers and racial extremists in the South—are consciously developing a technique of working both sides of the political street. This spirit of "neutralism" between the parties runs strong among other groups as well.

What would have to be done politically for either the Democrats or Republicans to achieve a decisive majority? Until that is brought about, how are we to judge the battling between Congress and the President bound to develop in the years ahead?

Largely to answer these two questions I have tried a novel experiment in dissecting the anatomy of Congress, by examining how every seat in the House of Representatives has shifted or held since 1932. At first, this probing into the Congressional "innards" yielded what seemed like a strange contradiction—the same trends of social and economic change were making one part of Congress more rigid in its party loyalty and other districts more volatile and uncertain.

Explored more fully, though, this contradiction proved to be a reflection of the struggle between extremism and moderation, of the past against the future, which consti-

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tutes the political crisis of our generation.

It is in the rigidly held seats that the feuds of the past are most jealously locked, while the newer emerging issues of our times are making themselves felt through the more closely contested Congressional districts. The stalemate that prevails in Congress today reduces itself to the paradox that the moderate political elements in the country dominate the shifting seats that determine which party controls Congress, but the "sure" seats shelter the extremists in both parties.

IN SHEER numbers it is surprising how few truly contested seats there are. Following through each district as best one can despite redistricting changes, we find that 220 seats, or more than half of the entire House, never have changed parties since 1932. Another 64 seats have swung so rarely —only once or twice, and prior to 1940— that they can be put in the same class.

This means that during most of the years since the New Deal the party struggle for Congress has been fought out in terms of roughly a third of the seats. Even this estimate overstates the number of seats which can be considered as really contested. Within the "fluctuating third" of the House will be found 39 more seats where the winner got at least 60 per cent of the vote in 1954.

The Democrats show up with a considerably higher proportion of rigid districts than do the Republicans. Of 232 seats held by the Democrats in 1954, as many as 155 never have gone Republican since at least 1932. Another six were won by the Republicans once or twice prior to 1940, but have been Democratic since.

Those figures pretty much tell the story of how heavy run the odds against the Republicans' regaining their old stand as the nation's majority party. The 161 seats which have been Democratic since 1940 represent 37 per cent of the whole House membership. In another 23 seats—5 per cent more of the House membership—the Democrats won in 1954 with at least 60 per cent of the vote. This leaves hardly 10 per cent of the House seats for the Republicans to go to work on.

A clean sweep of the contested seats would give the Republicans a sizable majority, but it would be a majority subject to quick overturning by a counter-swing in relatively few districts. To obtain a firm hold on Congress, one which can be counted on for election after election, the Republicans must crack some of the rigidly held Democratic seats.

The largest proportion of these "sure" Democratic seats are in the South, of course. Less generally realized is the fact that the second largest bloc of such seats is in Northern cities, where the Negro vote has been becoming steadily more important. Of the 161 seats which have been Democratic since at least 1940, 98 lie in the South, while 45 are concentrated in Northern cities or nearby industrial areas. Thirty-four of the Northern districts cluster in ten of the larger cities.

Between 1940 and 1950 the Negro population in these ten cities leaped more than two-thirds, while the white population increased less than 4 per cent. In these cities Negroes now account for roughly 12 per cent of the population. Moreover, as their numbers have increased so has their Democratic party loyalty. Negroes, in fact, have been the one voting element in the country which has grown more Democratic with every election since 1936. Truman got a heavier proportion of the Negro vote than did Roosevelt, while Stevenson did even better among Negroes than Truman.

Given this composition of "sure" seats, the conflicts of race and economic class are clearly conflicts from which the Democrats cannot escape.

And time seems to be sharpening these conflicts. The migration of Negroes from the South is working inexorably to increase the number of rigidly Democratic seats in the North which are particularly sensitive to racial problems: In Philadelphia, for example, only one Congressional district was as much as 20 per cent Negro in 1932, while two more were over 15 per cent Negro. By 1952 two of the city's six districts were over 1

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fifth Negro—one being as high as 44 per cent —and two more were more than 15 per cent Negro. In 1952 Negroes represented 16 per cent of the registered voters in Philadelphia.

In Detroit the number of Negroes soared from 4 per cent of the population in 1920 to 16 per cent in 1950. There were 97 census tracts without any Negroes in 1940. By 1950 the increased Negro population had spread so widely through the city that there were only 17 census tracts without Negroes. Detroit in 1954 elected its first Negro Congressman, bringing to three the number of Negroes in the House.

THE migration of population may also be sharpening the economic conflict between the two wings of "sure" Democratic seats. Except for New Orleans, no Southern city is large enough to lie in more than one Congressional district. This, of course, means that the economic solidarity of the urban districts in the South is thinned by the wide range of income elements embraced in the district. In many of the larger Northern cities, though, the flight to the suburbs has left behind whole districts with a preponderant concentration of low-income voters.

In some of these cities during the last few years, the Republican Congressional strength has been virtually wiped out by the combined effects of the exodus to the suburbs and the growing solidarity of the Negro. In 1954 the Republicans lost the last of Detroit's six seats—Michigan District 17—mainly because of the reshuffling of population through the city. In Chicago the Republicans have been pressed back to the outskirts, holding three partially suburban districts.

In Philadelphia, Boston, and Manhattan, the remaining Republicans are making their last stand veritably on the one-yard line. In each of these three urban centers the last Republican seat was won in 1954 by a fraction of one per cent of the vote. The Boston district, which embraces aristocratic Beacon Hill, would have gone Democratic in 1952 and 1954 if it had not been gerrymandered to include nearby suburbs.

The most heavily Democratic districts in the North, in short, are becoming those which are poorest economically and which have the largest Negro populations—two characteristics which tend to pull the representatives of these districts back to the old appeals of the New Deal. If this trend continues, as seems likely, the Congressmen from these districts will find themselves in sharpening conflict with the Southern districts, both with the anti-Negro sentiments so strong in the rural South, and the economic conservatism of the rising middle-class elements in the Southern cities.

The impressive show of party harmony which the Democrats in Congress have mustered since 1952 is certain to pass. It seems primarily a change in political manners, brought about by the chastisement of defeat, rather than any change in political character. Far from being outgrown, the old inner Democratic conflicts have been gathering new strength.

The underlying tensions between these two wings of "sure" Democratic seats are sufficiently intense so that the cracking apart of the Democratic party must be rated as a possibility. Still, two opposing considerations should be borne in mind.

First, there is the astonishing ability of American political parties to reconcile the conflicts which threaten to tear them apart. The hidden strength of the American political party lies in the fact that it serves as an arena for hostile political elements. The need to reconcile these clashing elements compels each party to bring to the surface unifying compromises, without which neither the Democrats nor the Republicans could have survived this long.

Second, the very intensity of this North-South conflict makes it difficult for the Republicans to appeal to either faction in truly dramatic fashion—since any open appeal to one side might solidify the other in the Democratic ranks.

Some Republican strategists have argued that since the Negro vote is so strongly Democratic it should be written off as lost. Other GOP leaders are hopeful that the Republicans may profit politically from the fact

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that the desegregation decision was handed down by a Republican Chief Justice, Earl Warren. My own studies of Negro voting indicate that the Negro attachment to the Democratic party has been as much economic as racial in motivation. As the lowest-paid worker in our industrial society, the Negro is both class and race conscious. Republican prospects of cracking the Negro vote seem about on a par with their chances among other workers.

Still, it does not follow that "writing off the Negro vote" would help the Republicans in their fight for control of Congress. The areas of the South which are most sensitive to the race issue are precisely those most insistent upon maintaining a one-party system locally and a solid Democratic delegation in Congress. Among the racial extremists there is no real drive for political competition except in Presidential voting, where they are seeking to counter the influence of the Northern Negro. In Congress their aim is to keep the South separate and solid from the rest of the nation.

Significantly, none of the seven Southern seats the Republicans won in 1954 are districts where racial issues dominate. Three cover areas of traditional Mountain Republican strength; the other four seats are urban or suburban. Throughout the South in 1952 Eisenhower carried 38 Congressional districts. In only seven or eight of these were racial feelings paramount.

The main Republican hope for further gains in the South, in short, would seem to lie in an economic appeal, and economic interest, as it turns out, is also the strongest force reshaping the Republican party in the rest of the country.

IF THE tensions of race and economic class are lodged in the skeletal bones of the Democratic party, farm and foreign policy seem the main conflicts embedded in the "sure" Republican seats.

Of 123 districts which have been unwaveringly Republican since 1940, only six are completely urban, 30 are either suburban or a mixture of suburb and city, while almost 70 are more than 40 per cent rural. Nearly three-fourths of the urban or suburban seats are in the East or on the West Coast, while about two-thirds of the rural seats are in the Midwest.

The Republican party battle has always followed sectional lines, of course. Most historians trace this back to the bitter economic struggle between the industrial East and the agricultural Midwest that accompanied our rise to world economic power in the 1890's. For thirty years after the Civil War, farm prices, which were exposed to world competition, dropped steadily, while the profit margins of tariff-protected industry rose. The Populist uprising has often been pictured as a revolt against the "international money power" and its agents in Wall Street.

Although some of this old economic hostility may be revived by the current drop in farm prices, the sectional Republican cleavage in recent years developed mainly out of our involvement in World War II. In 1936, when the Democrats swept all but 89 seats, the Eastern Republicans held more districts than did their Midwestern cousins. But in the elections which followed, the GOP gained much more heavily in the Midwest. During the war years the Midwest exceeded the East in the number of Republican seats by more than 20, the largest difference since 1918.

Since the war's end, though, a new pattern of Congressional realignment has been at work. Perhaps the outstanding feature of this new realignment has been the progress that the Republicans have made in establishing themselves as a *national party*, with strength in every section of the country. Compared with 1938, when the anti-Roosevelt coalition first came into control of the House, the GOP has lost four seats in the East and picked up four in the Midwest. The impressive Republican gains have come on the Pacific Coast, in the South, and in the Mountain States.

One result which already has registered has been a shift of the balance of power within the Republican party. Since 1946 the Pacific Coast has accounted for more Re-

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publican seats than the difference between the Eastern and Midwestern Republican strength. California, today, comes close to wielding the balance of votes in any sectional conflict within the Republican party.

That the means through which the Republicans are seeking to nationalize their following are primarily economic is evident from the districts they held in 1954 which they never won during the war.

Outside the West Coast, there are 13 such seats. Four are in Nevada, Utah, Montana, and Arizona, while five are in the South, four of these being predominantly urban or suburban. The others are the Eastern Shore of Maryland, which has a Southern orientation, another largely suburban Maryland seat, Louisville and its suburbs, and Indianapolis.

The transformation the Republican party is going through might be summed up as an effort to hold its anti-war, rural following in the Midwest, even while reducing the latter's influence within the GOP itself by gaining new economic strength in the South, on the West Coast, and in the Mountain States.

The two most vulnerable spots for the Republicans are in some of the Eastern industrial centers, and in the Midwest where the GOP suffered most heavily in 1948.

The 1948 election, as a matter of fact, provides a rough but revealing outline of what the Democrats would have to do to regain their old New Deal ascendancy. In that vote nearly all the wartime Republican gains were wiped out and enough rural seats were won by the Democrats to drop the GOP strength in the Midwest below its 1938 level. At the same time the Democrats also won back most, though not all, of the urban seats which they lost in 1946.

All these factors are not likely to reappear unless there is a considerable economic downturn. Even if the Democrats were swept back into power, they would face formidable difficulties both in holding that majority and in achieving sufficient internal cohesion among its elements to be able to function. On the one hand, a Democratic victory could be expected to start up the thermostat of Southern insurgency and conflict with the Northern urban elements. Then an economic revival would soon push the Democrats against the ceiling of their economic appeal among more moderate conservative elements—the threat of inflation.

In short, because of their backlog of Southern seats the Democrats can muster a large numerical majority in Congress far more readily than can the Republicans. But having done so, the Democrats find themselves torn by all the problems of racial and religious tolerance, foreign policy, and preservation of the gains of economic elements that range from the slums to the new spreading middle class.

How delicate is the political balance between the various economic elements is evident in the most closely contested districts. Fifteen seats have shifted at least twice in the last four elections, four being won in 1954 by less than 1 per cent, while 13 more seats break almost even between the parties.

Two-thirds of these seats are hybrid districts, part urban and suburban, or part farm and city, or a mixture of farm, city, and suburbs. Any appreciable shift in the economic balance that affects some one of the major voting elements in these districts is apt to shift the seat. In Indiana's eighth district, for example, the Republicans in 1954 actually held a slight edge in Evansville, which ordinarily would have insured their victory. But the GOP loss in the surrounding farm and coal-mining counties swung the seat to the Democrats.

Across the country there are enough such hybrid districts to tilt the balance of control.

In other words, the narrow party balance in Congress is a surprisingly sensitive reflection of the same divisions of economic interest and the same concern to preserve the post-depression gains which have led so many voters to develop political insomnia when trying to choose between the parties. Both in these fluctuations and in the rigidity of its unchanging seats, Congress now mirrors the conflicting forces throughout the country.

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We should not overlook the new sensitivity of Congress to national issues, reflecting the many forces operating to nationalize the basis of American politics. There will continue to be Congressmen who think exclusively in terms of some single sectional interest like cotton or silver. But such changes as the spread of industry through the country, the upgrading in economic standing of most Americans, and the impact of technology upon the farm belt have tended to draw much the same conflicts of economic class across the whole country.

Up to now these changes have brought an equilibrium but not real unity, which is perhaps the fundamental weakness in what we have termed the "revolt of the moderates." These moderate political elements represent the margin of victory in the voting for both the President and Congress, but if theirs is the balance of political power, they still have not been able to remake either party.

As far as Congress is concerned, it is doubtful that the rigidities of the past can be loosened by a tactic of balancing one party against the other. How people vote for Congress, as was pointed out earlier, revolves around the choice of "the man" or "the party." In the absence of a strong party trend, the pace of change in Congress tends to be slow. The men already in office are more easily reelected. Many seemingly "sure" seats are not even contested. Only a strong party trend can change all this.

In denying either party a majority, the moderate elements risk defeating themselves. Their "revolt" must be put down as a transitional movement rather than as a solution of our political crisis. The battle against extremism and the past cannot be won so long as the moderates remain "above both parties." To carry the country they must cast their lot decisively with one or the other party.

One further possibility should not be overlooked—an extremist attempt to realign the parties. The most likely form such a thrust for power would take would be to seek to establish a new anti-foreign, "states' rights" coalition, embracing both the racial revolt in the Democratic South and the disillusionments over foreign policy within the Republican ranks.

This possibility must be taken seriously. Particularly in the deep South, the extremists are sweeping into political rule, and when emotions of such violence are unloosed there is no telling how far they may sweep. Spreading industrialization has also weakened the South's traditional allegiance to lower tariffs, building a growing protectionist sentiment. The South's support for foreign aid has also declined dramatically in recent years.

It may indeed be an omen of things to come that when Herman Talmadge began his campaign to unseat Senator Walter George, the issue he drummed away on through the winter of 1955-56 was foreign aid. Talmadge's attacks had enough effect so that Senator George was driven to oppose Eisenhower's request for a long-range extension of the foreign-aid program.

If such a "states' rights" coalition ever did sweep into power in this country, it would be a reproduction of the tragedy now engulfing South Africa. While this danger that we will crack apart as a nation cannot be precluded entirely, both our history and political character indicate that in this country the forces of unification will win out in the end, however long the torment.

STILL, how do deadlocks of such intensity and complexity as the one we now face get broken? It may be helpful to examine briefly the long stalemate that prevailed the last time this country had two evenly matched parties.

The panic of 1873 ushered in the closest voting and most indecisive political period this country has ever known. In the 1874 elections the Democrats won the House of Representatives for the first time since the start of the Civil War. Not for twenty-two years were the Republicans able to reestablish sustained control of the Presidency and both houses of Congress.

When the election returns for these years are studied they reveal an almost unbelievable rigidity in party allegiances. Who won the Presidency was settled from one election

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to the next by the shifting of a finger count of states, chiefly Indiana, New York, and Connecticut.

Even within the "doubtful" states the rigidity of voting was amazing. In Ohio, for example, the voting was so close that it led to McKinley's being gerrymandered into the Presidency. Each time the Ohio legislature changed party control it redistricted the Congressional seats, paying special attention to McKinley's district. Five times between 1876 and 1890 his district was revamped in an effort to defeat him. In 1882 McKinley squeezed through by eight votes, but a Democratic Congress refused to seat him. Not until 1890 was a gerrymander hit upon that finally beat him.

The indignation aroused by this "outrageous gerrymander," records Joseph P. Smith, an Ohio historian, and McKinley's "magnificent fight . . . for re-election . . . led the press of the state to declare for him for Governor. . . ." McKinley's election as governor in 1891 and 1893 made him the GOP nominee for President in 1896.

In Indiana, 32 counties were unwaveringly Republican through the 1872-92 period; another 39 counties were equally strongly Democratic, while only 21 counties did any shifting between elections.

Each of these three blocs of counties cast roughly a third of the state's vote. From 1876 through 1892 neither the Democratic nor Republican counties fluctuated by more than 3 per cent in their voting. The ups and downs which swung Indiana every four years from one party column to the other came in the shifting counties. Not until 1896 could either party get an actual majority of the vote in these shifting counties or in the state as a whole.

Mainly this rigidity in voting reflected the strength of the political chains which had been forged even prior to the Civil War and which were hammered harder by that bloody struggle. That these loyalties can have remained so inflexible for so long becomes all the more remarkable considering how mighty was the sweep of events during the years after the Civil War.

Between 1860 and 1900 our population doubled, a third of the 44,000,000 increase representing the arrival of new immigrants from abroad. Virtually every phase of American living was transformed by a succession of inventions—the harvester and thresher, electric lighting, the typewriter, telephone, and telegraph; also the endless variety of machines which replaced manual labor, from the linotype to the shoe stitcher.

Ida Tarbell wrote of the era as one which was marked by the "nationalizing of business." Not only business but virtually everything else was being nationalized. In that fact, I believe, will be found the key to the politics of the period.

At the start of this era, neither the physical, social, nor economic basis for a truly national political coalition existed. This whole age can be said to have been devoted to bringing into being the basis for such a coalition. It was an age of mergers and "trusts" in politics as well as business. In Philadelphia, for example, each individual ward leader had acted like a minor feudal baron until Boise Penrose came along. Penrose had been elected to the state legislature by reform elements who were trying vainly to wrest political power from the aldermen by centralizing the management of the city in a mayor. Penrose persuaded Matt Quay, the state boss, to have the necessary law passed, although the argument used would hardly have pleased the reformers. "You can control one man," Penrose told Quay, "but a dozen ignorant saloonkeepers can raise hell."

Assisting this process of political consolidation was the expansion of the power of state governments. In Cincinnati, George Cox was still only one of many ward bosses until he allied with Governor Joseph Foraker. Through the State Board of Public Works, Foraker turned over to Cox the patronage power over two thousand jobs. The next year Foraker carried Hamilton County for the first time in three tries. Cox soon became the undisputed boss in Cincinnati.

ECONOMICALLY, as well, the basis for a more nationalized politics was being built up

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steadily. Between 1866 and 1890 railroad mileage increased fivefold, from 35,000 to 163,562 miles of track, as both ends of the continent were linked. The number of Federal employees was six times as high in 1900 as in 1861. The steady commercialization of agriculture was evidenced by a nearly tenfold increase in the use of fertilizers, although the number of farms did not quite triple.

But the truly watershed event of the age was the emergence of the United States as a world economic power. In 1874 our foreign trade accounts showed an export surplus for the first time. Before the Civil War half of our imports consisted of finished manufactures. By 1900 manufactured goods made up only a fourth of the things we bought from abroad. It was at the turn of the century that the value of manufactures we exported first exceeded the value of manufactured products we imported.

Through this whole period of deadlock numerous efforts were made to realign the country. But somehow the political pieces for an effective coalition defied being put together. The trouble was that the pieces did not belong to the same puzzle. If some groups were stirred to protest by the squeeze that accompanied the economic transformation of the country, others continued to vote "as they had shot" in the Civil War. The different third parties tried to break free of the Democratic and Republican hands, but these "crusades" had a strange way of simultaneously splitting and solidifying the party coalitions. In Iowa, for example, the Populist revolt strengthened the Republican sentiments of the German Americans, who had no use for the temperance and anti-immigrant feelings that went along with Populism.

In retrospect, it seems clear that before a decisive realignment could take place three developments were necessary: first, the vengeful memory of the Civil War had to fade; second, the sense of economic cohesiveness had to be strengthened; and, third, a new generation had to come of age to serve as the carrier for these changes.

By the early 1890's these three developments had moved pretty much in place. In 1890 the Democrats won the governorships in Michigan and Wisconsin and, the following year, in Iowa, indicating that even Republicans no longer considered it treason to vote for a Democrat. In 1892 the Democrats went on to win both houses of Congress in an astonishing sweep that cracked even such hitherto stalwart Republican states as Massachusetts, Iowa, and Michigan.

At this point, in short, not only was the deadlock showing signs of being decided, but it seemed that the Democrats might emerge triumphant. Then came the event which wrecked the Democratic hopes.

Most historians date the political turn from the McKinley-Bryan campaign. The election returns indicate that the decisive event really was the panic of 1893. The long party deadlock had begun with a depression —that of 1873—and it was ended with this second depression twenty years later.

SO MUCH more severe than any previous depression, the 1893 collapse forced the closing of 642 banks in one year. The new edition of Webster's Dictionary which appeared that year included for the first time a definition of the word "unemployment." Despite these hardships, our rise to economic power was not slowed. In 1893 our exports of iron and steel products exceeded our iron and steel imports for the first time.

In the 1894 elections the Democrats failed to return a single member to Congress in twenty-four states—including Indiana—and returned only one Democrat in three other states. In the twelve largest cities in the country the Democratic representation in Congress dropped from 29 seats in 1892 to only 12 in 1894.

These same cities provided almost 60 per cent of McKinley's plurality in the whole country. In 1872, when Grant scored his landslide reelection, these cities furnished 9 per cent of the total vote in the country. In 1896 they cast 13 per cent of it.

This whole period was marked by a tremendous expansion of the urban popula-

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tion, and the "rise of the city" has been credited with being the means through which the long political deadlock was broken. And yet when we study how these cities voted in each election after 1872, a significant fact stands out.

The Republican strength did not mount steadily as the urban population expanded, as might be expected. In 1892, for example, the voting trend in the cities actually seemed to favor the Democrats. What happened was that the growth of the cities brought together vast numbers of people who, by swinging together on an issue which struck a common voting nerve, produced a heavy enough shift to upset the old balance.

This realignment might not have held if McKinley's administration had not seen the end of the long agricultural depression and the return to prosperity. The real solidification of Republican power came in the 1904 election. In Ohio, for example, 30 counties which had been unwaveringly Democratic through the entire deadlock period showed a gain of only 3 per cent for the Republicans in 1896. In 1900 they broke another 3 per cent and in 1904, 5 per cent more, ten of the counties going Republican.

The way this long stalemate was broken suggests three conclusions.

First, the tenacious strength of political loyalties should not be underestimated. Once the emotions of people become attached to a political party, an almost catastrophic event is required to cause many of them to change. In fact, a whole new generation, free of these old memories, may have to arise before a decisive change can be registered. If this is true, the present period of political indecision could continue into the 1960's, when the record births of the postwar years will be translated into voters.

Second, political realignment seems a two-stage affair. In the 1874-96 period, at least, there was no steady, gradual build-up of strength which finally overwhelmed one side. There seems first to have been a preliminary period during which old loyalties were shaken loose, while varied new political combinations were tried, with nothing decisive happening. Once the old ties had weakened sufficiently the second stage of lasting change emerged quickly.

For some years now, of course, we have been shaking ourselves loose from old symbols and trying on new political feelings. How much more of this we must still undergo is not clear, but the grip of the past is being pried loose, finger by finger.

Third, apparently prodigious economic and social changes can take place in a country, for a time at least, without seeming to have any decisive political effect. Yet here, as well, the seemingly slow pace of change can be deceptive. Population movements and technological changes do regroup people both in their geographical and social locations, so that when they do swing the shift can be decisive.

New forces are abroad which are knitting the country closer together than ever before. In their immediate impact some of these forces seem to have a dividing effect, as in the sharpening cleavages in both the farm belt and the South. These divisions may seem like evidences that we are cracking apart. But I believe they really are signs of the necessary breaking down of old habits and old ways in preparation for a regrouping on a more unified and nationalized basis.

In short, there is no doubt in my mind that the unity of the country has been advanced immeasurably in recent years. What is uncertain is how long it may take for the new political sun to rise, and how we will manage our political affairs in the meantime.

During these years of transition we shall have to continue to look to whoever is President rather than to the Congress, or to the parties themselves, for unifying leadership. But if we are to have a President capable of rising above all the dividing influences in the country, "we the people" must also be able to rise above such influences. This, in turn, imposes a new responsibility upon all of us, particularly in determining how high a price is to be put upon domestic conciliation as against the needs of the cold war abroad.

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RIESMAN AND THE AGE OF SOCIOLOGY

Critic of "Groupism" and the Zeitgeist

DENNIS H. WRONG

WILLIAM SAROYAN once wrote a story about an ugly little man who tried to overcome his feelings of inadequacy by searching *Time* magazine for photographs of men as homely as himself. According to this simple criterion of worldly success, people who get their pictures not just inside, but right on the cover of *Time* must be veritable giants. Yet when the "giant" happens to be an American intellectual, his fellow intellectuals are less likely to identify with him than to start re-evaluating his achievements—if you are *that* successful, something must be wrong! There are signs that a revaluation of the work of David Riesman, who was enshrined in 1954 on *Time's* cover, is already under way. Perhaps this is the moment, now that the original gloss and novelty of Riesman's ideas are beginning to wear off just as they reach a wider audience, to take a fresh look at his methods and some of his leading themes.

Riesman's fame rests chiefly on his first book, *The Lonely Crowd,* originally published in 1950 and now a best-seller in a paperback reprint. A later book, *Faces in the Crowd,* consists for the most part of personal interviews with an oddly assorted group of Americans, and serves to illustrate rather than document the theory of American character developed in *The Lonely Crowd.* The year before last the appearance of a collection of Riesman's essays, under the title *Individualism Reconsidered,* became the occasion for laudatory review-articles in leading periodicals.

The enthusiastic reception of *The Lonely Crowd* was largely attributable to its challenging assertion of a number of things about American society that many people were beginning to sense, but had not yet succeeded in articulating clearly. In almost every decade a book appears that shatters certain prevalent stereotypes about American life by naming and pinpointing changes that haven't yet reached the general awareness. James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution,* in the early 1940's, was such a book, announcing in rather apocalyptic fashion the bureaucratization of Western political and economic life, and the increasing obsolescence of the opposition between capitalist and socialist that Marxists insisted on as the key to the understanding of modern society. But *The Lonely Crowd* has won greater fame than Burnham's book because it deals with a more universal aspect of social reality than that encompassed by formal political and economic institutions.

PROFESSIONALLY, Riesman is a sociologist, but his work has on the whole been more warmly received by "humanist" scholars, particularly literary men and historians, than by social scientists. His highly personal tone and style, and the liveliness and immediacy

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THE author of this essay on one of our most influential sociologists is himself a sociologist. DENNIS H. WRONG was born in Canada in 1923 and educated at the University of Toronto and at Columbia. Now on the faculty of the former, he has in the past taught at New York University, Princeton, and Rutgers, and also served for a time on George Kennan's staff at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, doing research into problems of population and natural resources. Mr. Wrong has contributed articles and reviews to COMMENTARY from time to time, his last previous writing of any length being "The Stork Surprises the Demographers," in October 1952. A book, *Population,* constituting a lengthier introductory study of the whole field of demography, will shortly be issued by Random House.

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with which he marshals his "data," make a sharp contrast to the rubber-gloved handling of carefully sterilized facts that has become typical of conventional social science research. Several respectable literary critics have likened *The Lonely Crowd* to a good novel, while historians have been impressed by his feeling for all that is volatile in American customs and institutions. Riesman's social-scientist critics, displaying often a trained incapacity to distinguish between questions of substance and method, grumble about his "impressionism" and concentrate their fire on his apparatus of concepts, or on the broad theory of the interdependence of character and society that provides the framework for his discussion of trends in American life.

Most of such criticism is clearly irrelevant to the central theme of *The Lonely Crowd:* the equation of what Riesman calls "other-direction" with modernity, his thesis that contemporary Americans, far from being the fractious individualists they like to see themselves as, are becoming docile conformists. Riesman's threefold classification of character types—"tradition-directed," "inner-directed," and "other-directed"—serves him mainly as a way of ordering, rather loosely, his many penetrating comments on phenomena as diverse as the tastes in comic books of ten-year-olds and the expense-account sociability of corporation executives. The concept of "other-directedness" defines certain tendencies people have observed and complained about in quite separate spheres of life: the fading of that passionate dedication to ideals of conduct or thought acquired in childhood which was characteristic of earlier "inner-directed" generations; the loss of parental authority to children's "peer groups"; the blanketing of leisure activities by the mass media; and the new philistinism of efforts to found a way of life on watered-down psychoanalytic notions.

Classifying friends and acquaintances as "inner-" or "other-directed" has almost become a parlor game among intellectuals, which we shall no doubt soon see being played on the lower cultural levels. Riesman's labels bid fair to become as popular as the familiar Jungian extrovert-introvert labels, with which they are sometimes erroneously identified, and this very catchiness arouses a certain suspiciousness in one. In view of the derogatory connotations that, in spite of Riesman's frequent disclaimers, cling to "other-directedness," a new self-help book called "You *Too* Can Become Inner-Directed!" would hardly come as a surprise.

Riesman himself, however, uses his labels with a good deal of caution. Like most creators of social-psychological typologies, he is forced to qualify the distinctiveness of his types by admitting the existence of blends, sub-types, and unclassifiables. Very few of the individuals analyzed in *Faces in the Crowd* emerge as unambiguous instances of a single form of "direction." Yet the inadequacies of his labeling system do not, I believe, stem solely from the fact that, as Riesman puts it, "the richness of human personality, human discontent, and human variety cannot be imprisoned within a typology." More important, his three forms of "direction" seem to be better adapted to characterizing different styles of life and moral outlook than to describing types of character or personality structure; that is, they are better *general cultural* than *individual psychological* categories.

RIESMAN defines character as "the more or less permanent, socially and historically conditioned organization of an individual's drives and satisfactions—those components of personality that . . . are *learned* in the lifelong process of socialization." This is adequate enough as a general definition, but in defining a particular character type some definite *content* must be ascribed to the "drives and satisfactions." Riesman's concepts ignore a very wide range of human variability. As he himself makes plain, a person may be meek or violently aggressive, sexually repressed or uninhibited, regardless of the form of "direction" he exhibits. Even in the most minimal Freudian sense, a full account of character structure must be biographical; that is, it should trace the history of the in-

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dividual's basic drives—sex, aggression, self-love, etc., etc.—showing how they were shaped by childhood experiences and projected, often assuming new and unpredictable forms, into situations confronted later in life. Admittedly, most theories and typologies of character fail to do this; they begin, to borrow a metaphor of John Dollard's, at about the thirty-yard line, assuming the existence of motives that are themselves clearly of social origin, and not built into the personality. Alfred Adler's "striving for superiority" and Erich Fromm's "drive for self-realization" are cases in point. At the very least, however, a character typology should describe *syndromes* of psychological traits: it should show how attitudes towards sex, aggression, authority, and social conformity hang together to form meaningful wholes.

The concept of the "authoritarian personality," which has been discussed frequently by contributors to COMMENTARY's "Study of Man" department, comes close in its range, depth, and richness of content to meeting these standards, although its polar type, the "democratic personality," does *not*, as Paul Kecskemeti and Nathan Glazer have ably shown in these pages. A comparison of the account of the authoritarian personality in the volume of that name (by T. W. Adorno, E. Frenkel-Brunswik, R. N. Sanford, and D. Levinson) with Riesman's character types brings out the one-dimensional quality of the latter. By failing to specify any concrete content for the individual's goals and impulses, Riesman's three forms of "direction" leave out too much that has to be taken into account if our aim is to understand particular people rather than the broad cultural pressures weighing on them. His books are full of detailed insights into American life, but general psychological forces are rarely distinguished from their individual and highly diverse manifestations in popular slogans, norms of conduct, or aesthetic tastes.

PERHAPS this is just a way of saying that Riesman is essentially a sociologist or critic of culture, rather than a "depth" psychologist. The problem of where the individual ends and society begins or, in more modish terminology, where personality ends and culture begins, is a perennial one for the social sciences. In a brilliant critique of psychological interpretations of social behavior ("Compliant Behavior and Individual Personality," in the *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1952), Reinhard Bendix issues a cogent warning against "the fallacy of attributing to character structure what may be part of the social environment." The warning seems very much to the point in the case of Riesman's work.

Historical and sociological writings are, of course, full of descriptions of personality types. We have Max Weber's hard-striving secularized Protestant, the prototype of Riesman's "inner-directed" man; the Southern patriot, generous, impulsive, addicted to verbal extravagance, and obsessed with race, described by W. J. Cash in *The Mind of the South;* the reserved English gentleman, concealing his emotions behind an armor of punctilio or of casual eccentricity; and many others. Riesman's "other-directed" man is a valuable addition to this gallery of types. With his craving for connoisseurship in the arts of consumption, his eagerness for the "inside dope" in politics, and his anxiety lest he be cut off from the warm flow of group approval, the "other-directed" man seems most representative of our rapidly changing mass society with its unprecedented level of material abundance.

But such personality images of particular societies or epochs do not depend on the concepts and insights of psychoanalysis, or of any other psychological theory about the genesis of individual character. They are *personifications of broad cultural tendencies* and are derived from moral codes, reigning ideologies, and the major themes and fashions of popular art, rather than from explorations of the inner life and largely unconscious strivings of individuals. In spite of Riesman's frequent reliance on Freudian ideas and his occasional tendency to write as if the validity of his typology depended on the results of questionnaires and projective

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tests, his "other-directed" man is really less social psychology than historical portraiture of a familiar and traditional kind.

The fathers of contemporary sociology—Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, G. H. Mead—stressed the influence of the group on the individual and the inseparability of the social and the psychic in their various polemics against Utilitarianism, Social Darwinism, and other brands of 19th-century individualist thought. But to these pioneer thinkers the primacy of the group was simply a brute fact to be taken into account in understanding human conduct and in evolving a viable personal or social philosophy. Today many social scientists and publicists have transformed fact into value and urge us to submit to the group, to conform to society, in order to achieve "peace of mind" or "adjustment." What was formerly viewed as an inescapable limit to human powers is now seen as something to be desired and actively pursued. The spread of the ideology of "groupism" in education and industry are responses to the high mortality rate of fixed moral standards in our brittle and labile culture. The gap between the life-situations of parents and children encourages a reliance for guidance on presumed constants of human nature. Such concepts as "anxiety levels," "group tensions," "we-feelings," and "emotional security"—which denude social life of its concrete particularity—have become the basis of child-rearing doctrines, educational philosophies, and personal guidance systems of all sorts. Much of Riesman's work is, of course, a direct attack on this whole tendency, but insofar as he views his triad of types as psychological entities rather than as social-historical constructions—insofar, that is, as he tends to "psychologize" social reality—he falls victim to the very trend he analyzes so perceptively.

NEVERTHELESS, Riesman's attempt to correlate his forms of "directedness" with stages in Western history remains valuable for its suggestiveness, whether we view his types as descriptive of different modes of morality or of different character structures. Indeed, he comes close to formulating a challenging philosophy of history; so considered, his three types of ethos seem far more useful, being more closely linked to social and economic factors, than, say, Pitirim Sorokin's classification of cultures as "ideational," "idealistic," and "sensate," or Ruth Benedict's "Apollonian" and "Dionysian" mentalities. Small pre-literate societies, largely immune to social change, provide their members with highly specific ready-made patterns of life; when such social units are disrupted, "tradition-directedness" declines and the "cake of custom" is broken. It was with this decline that the universalist religions were born, demanding of the individual not conformity to detailed rules but the cultivation of such abstract virtues as faith, hope, and charity. Similar "inner-directed" codes stressing thrift and diligent application to work emerged with the disintegration of the closely knit community life of the Middle Ages. Our high-consumption economy, with its need for group morale, stable routines of cooperation, and immediate rather than delayed gratification of material wants, now breeds "other-directed" values.

Unfortunately, Riesman's ambitious effort to relate types of moral code to stages in economic growth and territorial and demographic expansion is developed only very cursorily in the opening chapter of *The Lonely Crowd*. His theory seems capable of illuminating large areas of social history, but like all such imaginative syntheses it can never be firmly and unambiguously "verified." And so he moves on quickly from describing *societies* characterized by "tradition-," "inner-," or "other-directed" values to the seemingly easier task of applying these categories to the personality types of *individuals* within American society. The delusive hope is thus aroused that such a typology can ultimately be validated by subjecting enough people to a sufficient number of polls or tests.

Yet the ease with which vivid illustrations of Riesman's types crowd into one's mind (and into his books) tends to protect them from critical dissection. Everyone can point

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to a thousand and one "other-directed" tendencies in American life, but, unlike psychoanalytic notions which have also been banalized, Riesman's categories seem to lack any specifiable meaning that is independent of particular illustrations of them. They serve mainly as sign-posts calling attention to aspects of American life which earlier concepts have ignored. Riesman's tendency to use his categories chiefly as counters in debate—as polemical weapons—is responsible for their inadequacies as guides to a deeper understanding of contemporary America. To take full measure of their inadequacies requires a closer look at Riesman's underlying method and style of argumentation.

Most reviewers of *The Lonely Crowd* assimilated Riesman's attitude towards America to that of such conservative critics of modern culture as Ortega y Gasset and T. S. Eliot. They insisted that, despite his air of sociological objectivity, Riesman was really deploring the ascendancy of the "other-directed" man with his flabby conformist outlook and his pathetic readiness to surrender his individuality in the name of "adjustment" or "teamwork." Riesman certainly strikes this note—the very title of the book suggests it—but he also strikes several counter-notes in celebrating the openness and mobility of American life and praising many features of our commercial mass culture. And with the publication of *Individualism Reconsidered*, it became increasingly plain that, far from being another Europe-oriented critic of America, Riesman was more properly to be seen as a leader of the turn towards a positive evaluation of American society and culture which has become so marked among intellectuals in recent years. He himself observes in his preface that the more recent of the essays collected in the book are more affirmative in tone than earlier ones which were written in the 1940's.

The essays in *Individualism Reconsidered* range over a vast number of subjects, from the ideas of Veblen and Freud to the evolution of college football. Yet they exhibit a definite unity of tone: Riesman is always the gadfly attacking all "official" viewpoints, questioning ideas and codes that have become entrenched assumptions bound up with the status pride and the carefully guarded self-images of social groups or intellectual cliques. Among the things he attacks are the stereotypes cultivated by liberals who insist on race- or class-angling all public issues; the ritualized opposition to "McCarthyism" on the part of some academic intellectuals, who exaggerated its menace out of a perverse desire to see themselves as lonely martyrs; highbrow snobberies about Hollywood movies; the fetish that social scientists make of formal methodology; and the empty pontifications about "values" of their humanist critics.

This iconoclastic approach is explicitly stated in the essay entitled "Values in Context" that—fittingly enough—opens the book. Riesman calls his method "contextual analysis." Its essence is to explore the social roots of ideas and values and to reveal how these roots account for the narrowness and one-sidedness of a particular outlook. Thus Riesman tries to shock whatever audience he is addressing (whether in actuality or in imagination) by challenging its central assumptions and advocating ways of looking at the world that are novel to it. His method amounts to a kind of psychoanalysis of social ideologies, employing intellectual "shock treatment" as therapy.

He goes on to detail with remarkable candor the possible abuses and evasions inherent in this approach, thus disarming the would-be critic by anticipating his objections. He is not, he maintains, a total relativist: he is absolutely opposed to destructiveness and to Plato's proposed banishment of poets from the ideal society, and he confesses that he often "tends to become a fanatic crusading against fanaticism." "The very position I have described to you here," he adds, "is taken partly because I want no possibly liberating voice in the thinkers of the past to be wholly lost by destruction of the psychological roots in us enabling us to sympathize with it."

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Thus, after *The Lonely Crowd* was interpreted as an indictment of the egalitarian drift of American society, and the "other-directed" personality was equated with Ortega's "mass man" and Max Weber's "specialists without vision and voluptuaries without heart," Riesman shifted gear. Not wishing to supply further ammunition to the conventional highbrow critics of mass democracy, he called attention in his subsequent books to some of the virtues of the "other-directeds" and some of the shortcomings of the "inner-directeds." At this point the vagueness of these categories when detached from their polemical aim becomes evident. Riesman often appears to be more concerned with confuting and exposing stereotypes and ossified ideological formulas than with making an independent and self-sustaining contribution to social science. I do not mean to imply that this is an unworthy purpose; on the contrary, it is an important and necessary one, but its predominance in Riesman's work accounts for the *ad hoc* character of his typology. It may be that he writes in what might be called the "sociological mode" mainly because he senses its greater resonance in an age when everyone talks self-consciously about "our society" and finds it almost impossible to resist sociological categorization of experience.

Obviously, a direct search for the truth of any matter is ruled out if points of view are to be dealt with by relating them to their social milieux and then confronting them with their opposites, or with points of view more common in other times or places. Here the truth is something approached by listening to the many voices reverberating in the air, and one's own course is always plotted with reference to them. The intellectual becomes a kind of cultural balance-wheel reacting against the *Zeitgeist* by calling attention to its momentary blind spots; he refrains from trying to achieve his own vision of the truth independently of prevailing ideological fashions. This is not, I submit, the method followed by great thinkers in the past.

Riesman's choice of the Malthusian controversy to illustrate the method of "contextual analysis" is a particularly unfortunate one. He points out that Malthus's pessimism injected a needed dose of realism into the heady utopian atmosphere of the late 18th century, but today, when Malthus is widely admired, Riesman prefers to praise the optimism of Godwin and Condorcet as a corrective to the gloomy forebodings of contemporary prophets. Now the general disposition of an age toward either optimism or pessimism can tell us a good deal about the passions and prejudices involved in controversies such as the one which has raged over the problem of human increase for more than a century and a half. Today, however, in contrast to the 18th century, a massive amount of objective evidence can be brought to bear on the Malthusian controversy. Unlike the disagreements over aesthetic taste, over ways of spending leisure time, or even over broader life alternatives which Riesman takes up in other essays, the long-term controversy over the population problem cannot be treated simply as a matter of variant tastes and opinions distorted by ideological bias or the tyranny of fashion. On the contrary, the differences at issue can, within limits, be decided and settled by directly referring to concrete evidence. Admittedly, neo-Malthusian and neo-Godwinian popularizers usually voice exaggerated hopes or fears, but the way to correct these is by a more comprehensive and rational analysis of the factual evidence on the population problem rather than by attempting to find a compromise between clashing opinions.

IT MAY be true that creative thought usually has its origin in polemic. Certainly, intellectual history shows that ideas often meet in turn acceptance, rejection, and eventual transformation. But too intense a concern with the dialectic of ideas in society may lead to a heightened self-consciousness about the relation of one's own judgments to current intellectual fashions that narrows rather than broadens one's perspective on the present. This is a particular danger in our own time, when swings of the ideological pendulum have become very rapid indeed in

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response to war, revolution, economic depression, and technological change.

Too many intellectuals nowadays have won a reputation for originality and profundity simply by negating yesterday's clichés, or by "splitting the difference" between rival ideologies and presenting the synthetic result as a bold new philosophy for the times. Peter Viereck, an energetic publicist hailed as a challenging new thinker by people who ought to know better, carries this approach to extremes of absurdity: in a recent review of a book by William Buckley he calls for "a revolt against the revolt against revolt." This is to practice what Riesman calls "counter-cyclical" thinking with a vengeance. It is hard to see how, at least at Viereck's level, such jousting with what is taken to be the public mood of the moment can ever transcend the kind of sloganized thought it aims to correct.

If Riesman himself largely escapes the vulgarity inevitable in this obsessive bucking of the tides of fashion, it is because he possesses a genuine and acute sense of the connection between thoughts and their thinkers, between values and the social groups upholding them. He shows keen insight into the process whereby yesterday's avant-garde causes harden into constricting ideologies and lose contact with currents of social change to which they themselves have contributed. Yet Riesman's very sensitivity to the social and psychological ambiance of ideas and values prevents him from directly approaching these without first considering their roles in contemporary culture. His favorite adjective for points of view he wishes to encourage is "liberating," a term that carries unmistakable overtones of psychotherapy. If one chose to view Riesman simply as a sociologist or social psychologist one could hardly object to this approach, for social science tries to explain human actions and also ideas by seeking out their social and psychological roots. But Riesman's goals are clearly more ambitious: he is a moralist, a social philosopher, and even a critic of the arts, in addition to being a social scientist and educator.

One can find many examples of this tendency to oscillate between these various roles—a tendency that makes him a baffling figure to some of his readers. In one of the essays in *Individualism Reconsidered,* for instance, he mentions a talk he gave to some University of Chicago students on the movies. His aim was to shake them in their conviction that Hollywood movies were "junk," and he did so, or tried to do so, by pointing out the creative ingenuity involved in overcoming the artificial limits of the Production Code. "And then suddenly," he writes, "I stopped in the middle of my lecture, and for a while could not continue. For I had realized, as I looked at the intent faces of the students, that I might well be engaged in closing off one of the few casual and free escape routes remaining to them; that I might be helping to inaugurate a new convention: namely, that one had not only to attend Hollywood movies but to understand and appreciate them."

This readiness to consider the anxieties and suggestibilities of his audience is admirable in an educator, but it has nothing to do with the question of whether American movies actually deserve serious appreciation —which is the only question that matters to the film critic. True, Riesman is here describing an occasion on which he was performing a pedagogical as much as a critical task, but a tendency to confuse the two—or at least to overlook the differences between them—is evident in many of his essays on popular culture, and most conspicuously in his much criticized assertion that America is "one of the great cultures of history." Movies and comic strips may certainly be "liberating" for isolated rural or ethnic minority groups, or even for would-be highbrows obsessed with fears of liking something uncertified by recognized cultural authorities, but their intrinsic aesthetic merits are a different matter altogether.

In another essay Riesman insists that young intellectuals ought not to be forced to feel ashamed of preferring Stephen Spender's poetry to Dylan Thomas's. One can sympathize with this observation: the

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thought of all the eager "culture vultures" now dutifully reading Thomas is depressing. But the job of the literary critic is to compare poems and arrive at a judgment of their relative merits, not to allay the guilt of potential readers of criticism. A word that inescapably springs to mind, I fear, when one considers Riesman's constant concern with the reactions of his audience is—"other-directed."

ONE great trouble with the role Riesman has elected to play is that in our present rapidly shifting climate of opinion new ideas become transformed into slogans and stereotypes almost overnight. Riesman has already received *Time's* full treatment, which managed to reduce his three character types to cartoonable dimensions and assimilate his bland, questioning approach to American life to the Lucean version of the "new conservatism." Moreover, as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has pointed out, the fact that we live in a pluralist society does not prevent others from listening to our messages intended for a particular audience and adapting what is overheard to serve their own quite different purposes. Thus Riesman has been embarrassed by having his strictures on progressive education and on the over-reactions of intellectuals to "McCarthyism" echoed in distorted form by professional opponents of public education and by egghead-baiters. If your aim is truth alone, then such a perversion of one's criticisms can be ignored. But if you are alive to every twist and turn of audience response, and find your truth in that, then the response of unwanted audiences has to be considered too.

Awareness of society's resonance at any given moment to particular ideological themes is undoubtedly a valuable asset to a social thinker. But a certain detachment, even to the point of stubborn blindness, may to some degree be necessary in order to rise above one's times and place them in perspective on the broad canvas of history. The scientist must rely ultimately on the autonomy of his empirical method, the aesthete on his individual taste, and the moralist on his personal intuition of value. If one starts by listening to what everyone else is saying in order to correct or balance their partial visions, one risks becoming enmeshed in the very nets of ideas one wishes to escape. There must always be thinkers who can look at the world with a fresh innocence, cats to stare directly at the faces of kings, and children to exclaim at the nakedness of emperors.

Riesman's prominence as a spokesman of the era is a sign that the social sciences have come of age in our culture. He is the first American sociologist to be given an altogether respectful hearing by representatives of the older intellectual disciplines. Some of his colleagues, cherishing the purist ideal of an autonomous and specialized social science, may find this distressing, but I think they will realize eventually that it has been to their advantage, too, as well as to that of the rest of us. Riesman's role is that of a broker of ideas, a synthesizer of intellectual trends, and a demonstrator of the relevance of what others have said and thought to the lives we live "pressed against the knife-edge of the future."

A decade from now, when his concepts and themes have lost the verisimilitude they possess in the climate of the 50's, his work may look thoroughly dated. But his example will undoubtedly stimulate social scientists to broaden their interests and concerns. It is not accidental that Riesman calls himself a sociologist, nor that his professional training was ***not*** in sociology but in the humanities and law, for American sociology is just beginning to emerge from its parochialism of method and topic to emulate the old universalism that once marked the philosopher and man of letters. Riesman's contribution to this development has been a considerable one.

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THE THIEF

A Story

DAN JACOBSON

A BLACK-BROWED angry-looking man he was, and the games he played with his children were always angry games: he was chasing them, he was growling at them, he was snapping his teeth at them, while they shrieked with delight and fear, going pale and tense with fear, but coming back for more, and hanging on to his hands when he declared that they had had enough. There was a boy and a girl, both dark-haired and thin, the boy a little older than his sister and protective towards her with servants and strangers, with everyone but his father: he did not dare to protect her when his father sprang at her from behind a bush, and carried her shrieking, upside down, to his lair that was, he told them, littered with the bones of other children that he had already eaten.

The mother sat aside from these games —she sat at the tea table at the head of the small sweep of lawn towards the swimming bath, beyond which were the trees where her husband and children played, or she lay in the sun on the side of the swimming bath, with a towel about her head, and it was only rarely that she called to them or warned them of their father's stealthy, mock approaches. She sun-bathed or she read in the sun; they were all sun-tanned in that family, from spending so much time at their swimming bath, and from their annual six-weeks' holiday at the Cape, where they lived the life simple in a seaside cottage with only one servant. The big house in Johannesburg seemed to have innumerable servants, all black men in gleaming white jackets and aprons and little white caps like those of an Indian political movement, but in fact only another sign of their servitude, and these black men kept the house like a house on show: the house shone, unmarked by the pressures, the stains and splashes, the disorder of living. Not that the children were the least bit tidy—they dropped things about them as they went, and left the toys and the sticks and the items of clothing lying where they had been dropped, but the servants followed, picking up things and putting them in drawers, as though that was all that they had been born for, this dance of attendance on the two nervous, dark-haired children. And the mother, who had been poorly brought up, loved it in the children that they had, so without question or wonder, the insolence of wealth. Once when he had hardly been more than a baby she had asked the boy: "Would you like to be a little black boy?"

The child had been puzzled that his mother should have asked this. "No," he said, frowning, bringing his fine dark eyebrows together, and looking up in puzzled distaste.

"Why not?"

The puzzlement had left the boy's face, and there had been only distaste as he replied, "They have nasty clothes." And for this he had been given a kiss, which he accepted demurely. The children accepted

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DAN JACOBSON made his American debut several years ago in COMMENTARY, and since then has contributed stories and articles to this and other magazines, among them the *New Yorker*. His first novel, *The Trap* (1955), attracted the attention of critics on both sides of the Atlantic, and his second, *A Dance in the Sun*, will soon be published by Harcourt, Brace. Mr. Jacobson was born in Kimberley, South Africa, in 1929 and holds a degree from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. After leaving South Africa, he spent some time on a kibbutz in Israel, and later settled in London, where he has been living for the past few years.

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their mother's affection as a matter of course; it was for their father's mock-anger that they lived. The mother knew this and did not resent it: she believed that the insolence she loved in them had come from their father, and for her her husband's violence was profoundly confused with his wealth.

But sometimes, watching the children at their perilous play with their father, even the mother would be afraid. She would lift her eyes from her book, or unwrap the towel which had been muffling the sun's rays to a yellow blur on her eyes, and her heart would sink with fear to see them run and stand breathing behind some tree while their father prowled on tiptoe towards them. So frail they seemed, with their bony elbows poking out from their short-sleeved blouses, and their knees large and round below the dress or khaki shorts that each wore. And he seemed so determined, so muscular in the casual clothing he wore in the evenings, after he had come from work, so large above the children, with so much black hair on his arms. But she accepted his violence and his strength, and she never protested against the games. She would sometimes watch them play, but her eyes would go back to the book, or she would again carefully wrap the towel about her eyes and her ears, and sink back into her drowse. She seemed sunken under her husband, under his wealth, under his strength; they had come down upon her as the sun did where she lay at the side of the swimming bath, and she questioned them no more than she could have questioned the sun. She had submitted to them.

The father laughed, showing his white teeth, when the children ran yelling from him. In the shadows of the trees they waited for him to come again. He moved slowly towards them, and a lift of his arm made them scamper. He was king of his castle—and castle enough the house was too, in its several acres of ground, and its trees that cut it off from sight of the road.

THEN one night the burglar came to their house. It was not for nothing that their house, like every other house in Johannesburg, had every window barred with steel burglar-proofing, that every door had a double lock, that two large dogs were let loose in the grounds at night. It was not for nothing that the father had a revolver in his wardrobe, always loaded and on a high shelf out of reach from the children, for the burglars in Johannesburg can be an ugly lot—gangsters, marauders, hard black men who seem to have nothing to lose, who carry with them knives and knuckledusters and guns.

But this one was not one of these. This one was a boy, a fool, a beginner, come by himself to the wrong house, barked at by the dogs where he stood in the darkness of a corner of the garage between the large painted fender of a car and a workbench behind him. He did not even reach for one of the chisels on the bench behind him, but stood squeezing the fingers of one hand in the grasp of the other, as though by that alone he might be able to stop the shivering which shook his shoulders in quick, awful spasms.

But the house did not know what he was and what he might do. The whole house was wild with lights and shouts and the banging of doors. Men, women, they had tumbled out pell-mell from the rooms in which they slept: one of the servants had been roused by the barking of dogs and had seen the burglar slipping into the garage. The house had all been in darkness, and still, so still that not even the trees had moved under the brilliance of the stars in the early morning sky, when the shouts of the servant had first come calamitously upon it. Wild, hoarse, archaic, the shouts had sounded, like the shouts a dreamer might dream he is making, in his deep terror of the darkness around him. Then there had been the other shouts, the house in uproar.

And the father in his pajamas and dressing gown, with the revolver thrust unsteadily before him, advancing across the back yard. The servants fell in behind him, even the one who had been guarding the window of the garage. "Get to the window, you fool!" the father shouted. "Guard the window!"

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Unwillingly, one or two went to the window, while the father came closer to the garage door.

He did not know what might be behind the door; he found that he could not push the garage door open, for fear the burglar might spring at him. He was a stranger to himself, roused out of bed by hoarse shouts, hurried downstairs by danger, chilled by the early morning air: to him it seemed that he had never before seen the place he was in; never before felt the lock under his hand, never felt the painted smooth wood under his hand; and when he looked back, the house, with the light falling on the paved yard from the open kitchen door, was the house of a stranger, not his at all. The servants were simply people, a throng, some carrying improvised clubs in their hands, all half-dressed, none of them known, all of them strangers.

He could not push the door open. The dread of opening himself to whatever might be there was too great. The servants pushed a little closer; and he felt his fear growing tighter and closer within him. They pressed so closely upon him his fear had no room to move, and when he did at last lift up the revolver it was in desperation, to drive away the people who constricted his fear and pressed it suffocatingly upon him. He lifted the revolver and shouted, "Leave me!" He tilted it towards the stars and fired. The clamor of the shot was more loud and gross in his ears than he could have imagined, and with it there sprang from the muzzle a gout of flame, vivid in the darkness, like a wild eager tongue. When the servants shrank back he felt a momentary sense of release and relaxation, as though he had done the thing for which he had been dragged out of bed, and could be left now to go in peace. Then he felt the door behind him budge.

He leaped away from the door so violently that he stumbled and fell, and he was on his knees with the revolver scratching uselessly against the paving when the burglar came out of the garage. The servants too had staggered back when their master had leaped towards them, so the burglar stood alone in the doorway, with his hands still squeezed together, but lifted now to his chest, like some one beseeching mercy. From where he sprawled on the ground the master could only gasp: "Catch him. Get round him." And one or two of the men-servants came forward. They hesitated, and then they saw the spasms shaking the burglar, so they came to him and took him roughly, pinioning him. Their master was struggling to his feet.

"Bring him into the kitchen," he said. There was a sigh from the group of servants, and a babble, then eagerly they began jostling the burglar towards the kitchen, and he went unresistingly.

To the father the kitchen too looked harsh and strange, a place of urgency, and there seemed to be so many people in it: all the servants, and his wife, and the two children, and the burglar, and the servants' friends, those who had been sleeping illegally but without harmful intent in the rooms in the back yard. These shrank back now, as if only now realizing that the events of the night might have consequences for themselves too, and not only for the burglar they had helped to catch.

"You've phoned the police?" the father asked.

"Yes," the mother said. "The flying-squad's coming."

The father sat down at the kitchen table, blowing his cheeks out with exhaustion, feeling the tension beginning to ebb from the pit of his stomach. He could not look at the burglar. The mother too, for different reasons, avoided looking at the burglar, but the two children, in their neat white pajama suits, had eyes for nothing else. They knew all about burglars: they had grown up in Johannesburg, and they knew why the steel bars lay across their bedroom windows, and why they were not allowed outside the house after nightfall, and why the dogs roamed loose at night. But this was the first burglar they had seen. Even the revolver loose in their father's hand could not draw their eyes from the burglar.

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He stood in the middle of the kitchen, and his dark eyes were dazed, unseeing. He was a young African—he looked no more than seventeen—an undersized, town-bred seventeen years of age. He was wearing a soiled gray sports coat and a pair of ragged trousers that reached only about halfway down his shins, and when the spasms came he shook from his shoes upwards, even his strained brown ankles shaking, his knees, concealed by cloth, shaking, his loins, his shoulders, his head, all shaking. Then the fit would pass and he would simply stand, supported on each side by the household servants.

He seemed to see nothing, to look at nothing, to hear nothing: there seemed to be within him a secret war between his will and the spasms of shaking that came upon him, like a fit. The color of his face was terrible: he was gray, an ash-gray, a gray like that of the first thinning of the darkness after a rain-sodden night. Sometimes when every other part of his body was free of the spasm, his mouth would still be shaking; his lips were closed, but they shook, as if there were a turbulence in his mouth that he had to void. Then that too would pass.

The little boy at last looked away from the burglar to his father, and saw him sitting weakly in the chair, exhausted. The hand that held the revolver lay laxly on the kitchen table, and from it there rose a faint acrid scent, but the gun looked in his hand like a toy. The father could not move and he could not speak, he sat collapsed, until even the servants looked curiously at him, as the little boy had done, from the burglar to him, and then back to the burglar again. They murmured a little, uncertainly; the two who were holding the burglar loosened their grip on him and shuffled their feet. They waited for direction from their master, but no direction came. The little boy waited for action from his father, but no action came. The boy's fine-featured face was turned to his father, and when the father met his son's gaze he looked away. The son was the first to see that his father could make no action, could give no word.

So he gave the word himself. In a voice that was barely recognizable as his own, his face with its little point of a nose contorted, he screamed in rage and disappointment: "Hit the burglar! Hit the burglar!" He danced on his bare feet, waving his small fists in the air. "Why don't you hit the burglar? You must hit the burglar." His voice was high and strident, and he danced like a little demon in his light pajamas. "Hit!" he screamed. "Hit!" His little sister joined in because she heard her brother shouting, and she added her high yell to his: "Hit the burglar!"

"Get the children out of here!" the father shouted. The children had raised their voices for a moment only, but it had seemed endless, their little voices shrilling for blood. "What are they doing here?" the father shouted in a fury at the mother, pulling himself up at last. "Get them out of here!" But he made no move to help the mother, though he saw that she could not manage both dancing, capering children. And the little boy saw that his father did not move towards him, so again he screamed, "Hit the burglar!"

"Jerry," the mother said to one of the servants, "help me. Don't stand there!" She was grappling at arm's length with the flailing hands of the little girl.

The dark body of the servant bent over the boy. Then he sprang back, waving his hand. The boy had bitten him. So he too being near distraught with excitement and this last unexpected little assault, reached out and hit the little boy across the back of the head. The boy staggered; he fell down and lay on the sparkling kitchen floor. But it was only for a moment. He came up growling, with hands lifted, curled inwards, and fell upon the burglar. It took two servants to prise him off, and when he was finally carried away over the black powerful shoulder of the one, he had left two deep scratches on the face of the burglar, both from the forehead down, broken by the shelf of bone over the eyes, and continued down the cheeks. The burglar had made no effort to defend himself, knowing what would hap-

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pen to him if he did anything to hurt the child.

Then the police came and took the burglar away. By that time the children were safe and quiet in the nursery; and later the mother too fell asleep after taking a sedative.

But the servant who had hit the boy was dismissed the very next day, by the mother, who could not bear it that a servant should have struck a child of hers. Least of all the son to whom she now submitted, the son who after the night the burglar had come to the house was not afraid to protect his sister, when her father fell upon her in their games in the garden, and who fought, when he himself was picked up and carried away, as an adult might fight, with his fists and his feet and his knees, to hurt. His will was stronger than his father's, and soon they were facing each other like two men, and the wild games and the shrieking among the trees grew rarer. For the father was afraid of the games he sometimes still had to play with his son, and there was none among them who did not know it, neither the son, nor the daughter, nor the mother, nor the father from whose hands in one night the violence in the family had passed.

OF WATER COME TO WATER

CHARLES G. BELL

BEFORE the flood that year the rains set in
Pouring all day, with thunder in the dark.
Our cook came complaining to her work:—
The roof was leaking; the shingles were half gone;
We went down with Daddy to see what could be done.

Our house is like the body, the place we live,
A shell against the unforming. Theirs was dark,
The windows patched with boards, and such a smell
Of mold and wood smoke, body-fumes, it seemed
A liquid, lymph and blood of some savage life.

Black babies rooted in the dark like worms;
The grown boys lounged, peering at the doors;
And a man—not the husband, he had changed
Years since in the fluid shiftings—smoked at the hearth,
The strong blue vapor around him like a pool.

Everywhere cots and pallets. Where one slept
The rain came through, a dark place on the covers;
The other beds were moved to miss the drippings;
Rusty cans caught the slow drops rattling,
Or with the sound of water come to water.

That night in a dream I slept in such a bed,
Under the broken roof, and the rain fell
As it falls on a corpse dissolving in the ground.
In a week the levee broke and the floods came.
Strange and wonderful these hints and meltings home.

THIS poem will be included in the book *Delta Return*, CHARLES G. BELL'S second volume of verse, which will appear shortly under the imprint of Indiana State University Press.

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STIRRINGS IN ARABY

Tribal Feuds and World Politics

RAY ALAN

THE unrest and instability provoked by the disintegration of centuries-old social and religious conceptions in Syria, Egypt, and other Moslem states with a window on the West are spreading like a plague to even the remotest corners of Arabia. There is now social ferment in the Saudi kingdom, in Yemen, Kuwait, and Aden, with the usual repercussions on local big-power interests. Saudi forces and British-controlled native levies have fought two pitched battles recently for the oasis of Buraimi. Other British forces, including regular units of the army and Royal Air Force, have been in action around Aden and in the Hadhramaut. Even unexplored Oman has edged its way onto the international agenda.

When, on November 23, 1955, the Arab League secretariat in Cairo received its first official call from a senior Soviet diplomat—the then ambassador Daniel Solod, now head of the Near Eastern section of the Soviet Foreign Ministry—the subjects most keenly discussed were neither the ludicrous Baghdad Pact nor even Arab-Israeli relations, but Britain's wrangles with the Arabs over Buraimi, the Aden Protectorate, and Oman. (The Arab League secretariat later placed at the disposal of the Soviet embassy in Cairo important extracts from its archives dealing with these problems.) And when Sir Anthony Eden visited President Eisenhower at the end of January, Buraimi and Oman were again overlooked.

THE complex feuds and inter-tribal tensions of Arabia multiply as one moves southwards down the great peninsula—until, south of the Tropic, they reach an intensity bordering on self-caricature. In Britain's Aden Protectorate until only a few years ago, half a dozen tribal and sub-tribal alliances were permanently at war with one another, over issues long since forgotten, and every other village had a feud with its nearest neighbor. Cultivators spent much of their leisure burning each other's crops and maiming each other's livestock, and frequently had to crawl along trenches and gullies to get to their fields.

In Yemen, the present Head of State, the Imam Seif el-Islam ("Sword of Islam") Ahmed, gave tribesmen a free hand to loot his capital, Sanaa, following his father's assassination in 1948, and plucked up courage to reside there himself only last year. Also last year, after being rescued by a tribal uprising while besieged in his harem, he ordered the decapitation of his brother Seif el-Islam Abdullah and the incarceration of three other brothers.

The British administration at Aden—backed, very forcefully at times, by the Royal Air Force—has devoted a major part of its energies over the last two decades to stamping out feuding and inter-tribal conflict. Veteran Political Officer Harold Ingrams was obliged to collect, by cajolery and threats, more than a thousand sheikhly signatures, hieroglyphs, and thumbprints on one truce agreement alone before it could become fully

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THE Arab world, for whose friendship both West and East are bidding energetically today, is little known in its historical "heartland," the Arabian Peninsula, an area of desert and thin coastal settlement stretching southward between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. RAY ALAN, who describes the incursion of 20th-century forces into this structure of innumerable bickering potentates, is a British journalist whose "beat" is the Middle East. His "Strange World of the Druzes" was published in our number of last January.

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effective. The construction of a major oil refinery at Aden, after the loss of Abadan, absorbed a sizable proportion of unproductive local manpower, and the relatively high wages now being paid there are convincing thousands of former tribesmen that regular employment can be more profitable than, in Gertrude Bell's words, stealing each other's washing.

In independent Yemen, on the other hand, there is no paternalistic benevolent despotism to wean the population from its medieval pastimes: there is simply despotism *tout court,* mitigated occasionally by assassination. The shifting coalitions of fratricidal plotters perpetually swirling around the throne are all too eager to exploit vendettas and inter-tribal friction whenever possible.

But both in the Aden Protectorate and in Yemen old feuds and antagonisms are beginning to be superseded by new alignments with a distinctive socio-political tinge. The running is being made increasingly by urban "Free Yemen" and "Free Aden" groups based on Cairo, Aden, and Mukalla, and composed largely of merchants and young men who have acquired a taste for the 20th century.

An extraordinarily high percentage of the coastal merchants of this corner of Arabia, living at the halfway house between Western Europe and the Far East, have been at least once to Liverpool, Marseilles, Genoa, or Singapore, and many have spent several years overseas; and a similar leavening of educated youths, including merchants' sons and the scions of aristocratic and sheikhly families, have been to school in Cairo, Alexandria, and Beirut. Merchants and students alike have brought back with them from the "West" not only an eye for automobiles and pin-up girls, but a vocabulary studded with magic words like "development" and "reform" and an appetite for representative institutions.

SIGNIFICANTLY, even the Imam of Yemen has taken recently to speaking in something approaching a modern idiom. Shaken, no doubt, by his father's assassination in 1948 and his own narrow escape this year, disturbed by the response within his kingdom to "Free Yemen" propaganda seeping in from Yemenite exiles in Aden, and spurred by stories of the showers of gold now raining upon the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, he has granted an oil concession to a German firm, given other German enterprises contracts for the construction of a cement works, a tannery, and a textile mill, and sent his eldest son, the Emir Badr, to Cairo to recruit a token number of highway engineers and teachers and offer a royal pardon to educated "Free Yemenites" willing to return and lend a hand in modernizing the country.

But such modernization as is envisaged in courtly circles is outward and technical only —and more likely to heighten social tensions than appease them. Returning emigrés will have their pardons revoked if they indulge in political activity. Essentially, Yemen (population between four and six millions) remains a one-man show; and it is not now likely, with the prospect of oil royalties before him, that its ruler will voluntarily relinquish his monopoly of power.

The Imam, as head of the Zaidi sect of Islam, exercises both temporal and spiritual authority and controls personally every department of state, from the treasury (several crates of gold sovereigns and Maria Theresa dollars hidden in caves in the hills) to his administration's store cupboards. The man who runs Yemen's sporadic radio service—the transmitter was the gift of an American diplomatic mission in 1945—told me that even his orders for stationery had to be approved by the Imam.

Aside from the radio, the usual means of communication and transportation in Yemen are still two- and four-legged. The Head of State maintains contact with his district governors and barefooted military units (total strength between 18,000 and 21,000) by means of runners who carry a scroll in a special sheath on their dagger-belt. Justice and taxation are arbitrary, and the army and royal bodyguard recently came to blows to decide which of them should have the privilege of collecting taxes. Bedouin tribes are required to leave a quota of their male

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members in mountaintop prisons to answer for their behavior: the hostages—many of them small boys—are relieved periodically in relays, but they are badly neglected and liable at a moment's notice to torture or execution should their tribes displease the Imam. An urban family's tax assessment may depend on whether it has contributed a presentable daughter to the royal harem. An educated Palestine Arab friend of mine who occupied an administrative post in Sanaa for several years claims to have saved his three sisters from the harem only by pretending they were his wives.

THE port of Aden and eighty tawny, torrid square miles around it (total population 110,000) are administered by officials of the British Colonial Service as a Crown Colony. In the adjoining Aden Protectorate (*112,000 square miles; population about* 800,000) British control is indirect. Authority is divided among more than fifty largely autonomous sultans, sheikhs, and one emir, who rule on feudal or tribal lines and assert their sovereignty to the extent of imposing duties on goods passing through their areas. These internal tariffs and the vested interest of several local rulers in camel-breeding are a hindrance to overland trade and the development of road transport. Some camel-breeding sheikhs have ordered their men to attack freight-carrying trucks on sight, and refused them passage even during the great Hadhrami famines of 1943 and 1948-49 (fortunately the RAF was on hand to parachute supplies into the afflicted areas).

In hopes of unshackling internal trade and communications and inaugurating a trend towards administrative unification and modernization, the British authorities have for several months now been attempting to persuade the emir, sultans, and sheikhs of the Protectorate to federate their territories. Most of the major princelings have agreed in principle, but the initiative has aroused considerable opposition and undoubtedly helped touch off the present disorders. The camel-breeding sheikhs are naturally opposed to anything that will facilitate the encroachment of wheeled transport onto their domains; others have found that their authority over their subjects wilts as blood feuds die down and modern ideas seep in, and regard federation as the thin end of a wedge that may destroy what remains of their privileges; still others fear for the substantial incomes their local tariffs earn, though the British authorities have promised to compensate them for this loss.

A major drawback is that federation would run counter to Arab tradition. Perpetual sheikhly rivalries and inter-tribal conflict over grazing rights, spheres of influence, rights of way, and the right to tribute from lesser tribes, travelers, and cultivators are (for obvious economic reasons) an integral part of desert mores. Almost every Adenese and Hadhrami sultan and sheikh has claims on or grievances against neighboring chieftains, and only respect for the RAF has restrained the most ambitious of them from embarking on campaigns of conquest and aggrandizement in emulation of Ibn Saud. Acceptance of federation would mean voluntary renunciation of all such claims and ambitions—a self-imposed humiliation dangerous in a land where the size of a ruler's following fluctuates with his prestige and *éclat*.

It is possible that the Imam of Yemen sees himself as a potential Ibn Saud: reviving a long-standing frontier dispute with the Aden authorities, he has laid claim to a substantial stretch of Protectorate territory and, fortified with assurances of Arab League and Soviet sympathy, protested against the British federation project as an infringement of his own interests in the area and a violation of the rights of its inhabitants. A partial explanation may be that, like many another Arab ruler before him, he has realized the value of anti-British heroics as an inexpensive means of diverting the attention and energies of his personal enemies and currying favor with nationalistic elements. The "Free Yemen" movement has for some time included in its program the annexation of the whole of Aden—Colony and Protectorate.

The native Adenese and Hadhrami reformist groups ought, logically, to support

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the British federation project as a progressive move; but the young men in their ranks—the majority—are becoming infected with the prevailing Near Eastern nationalist virus. Influenced by the Cairo radio, and resentful despite (and possibly, subconsciously, because of) its present prosperity that Aden should be the one part of the Arabic-speaking world in which outright colonial rule survives, they are inclined to suspect everything British, including reforms.

To date, nationalism has only one achievement to its credit in the Aden Protectorate—an ugly riot in the port of Mukalla; but it is encountered in other areas either as a secondary factor underlying revolt or, in accordance with precedent in other parts of the Near East, as camouflage for vested interests. Some of the rebel tribesmen have been incited by agents of the Imam Ahmed, others by sheikhly opponents of federation. Like the Imam, the latter naturally prefer to pose, in the eyes of the impressionable, as champions of "national freedom" rather than of princely privilege; and assisted by the Cairo radio, which is working hard to fan flames of nationalism from every incidental spark, they will probably succeed in the short run in diverting reformist energies into the blind alley of nationalist agitation.

THE Sultanate of Oman (population between 500,000 and 700,000), due east of British-protected Hadhramaut, is America's oldest Arab friend. A treaty of amity and commerce between the two countries was signed in 1833. So little trade did it stimulate, however, that the United States consulate in Muscat, the capital (population 3,500), was closed down in 1915 after its bored incumbent had complained to the State Department that only two American ships had called there in sixty years. "It is respectfully submitted," he wrote, "that two years of practically enforced idleness is not good training for one beginning a consular career."

Fortunately for Anglo-American relations, the treaty contains no military provisions, for as this is written the Arab League secretariat is wondering with bated breath how best to exploit a complaint from the "King" of Oman to the effect that his territory has been "invaded at three points by British troops, several villages having been occupied by force." There was gay talk in Cairo of submitting the "dispute" to the UN.

After the Saudi kingdom, Oman is the largest political entity in Arabia, occupying about 900 miles of coastline. But despite its size and long-established independence, it is a member of neither the UN nor the Arab League—though its "King" has now requested admission to the latter body—and maintains even less diplomatic contact with the outside world than Yemen. The only representative of a non-Asiatic power permanently resident in Oman is the British Political Agent who lives in the fortress-like British consulate at Muscat. Semi-officially (the precise formula has never been worked out), he is also one of the principal advisers of the Head of State; and his advice is usually taken, since a British subsidy is necessary to keep Oman's finances afloat.

How comes it, then, that this suckling of the British lion is on the point of becoming an Arab League gladiator? The answer is that the Head of State who enjoys the advice of the British Political Agent in Muscat is not the effective ruler of the greater part of the country. The authority of Sultan Sir Sayyed Said ibn Taimur—a pleasant, soft-spoken, unassuming, and rather shy little man—normally extends only along the coastal plain, where the population is mainly Indian, Iranian, and Negro. The Arabs of the interior have for several decades given their allegiance to a succession of rebel Imams whose residence is generally at Naswa, in the hills southwest of Muscat; and in conformity with the dichotomous pattern of Arab politics, the Imams' authority has occasionally been challenged in turn by ambitious sheikhs of the undemarcated desert borderland between Oman and Saudi Arabia.

The present Imam, Ghaleb ibn Ali, who has taken the title "King of Oman," has had trouble with chieftains who, attracted by the lavish subsidies the oil-rich Saudi

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kingdom pays its sheikhs, are tempted to proclaim their allegiance to King Saud. At the same time sheikhly circles are buzzing with rumors that two American firms—Cities Service and Richfield Oil, both newcomers to the Near Eastern petroleum industry—have evidence of the existence of vast oil deposits in Dhofar province, at the southernmost tip of Oman. These firms hold a concession from the Sultan at Muscat, and if oil is struck it is to the Sultan that they will pay their royalties—whereupon the Imam's following would melt away overnight. Hence the Imam's patent haste to rally regional as well as local support, and obtain some sort of recognition from the Arab League, as a preliminary to asserting or at least claiming *de facto* sovereignty over an area extending as far southwards as may be necessary to force the American companies to come to terms with him. In return for Saudi support (which has included arms and money) the Imam Ghaleb has agreed to recognize Saudi sovereignty over the oasis of Buraimi.

To kill all these birds, what better missile than Anglophobia? This particular Anglophobe, however, appears to have overshot his target. British petroleum interests are eager to open up the interior of Oman for prospecting and, if oil is found in commercial quantities at Buraimi (of which more later), to build a road and perhaps a pipeline from there to the coast north of Muscat. But first, real rather than, as hitherto, merely theoretical political unity—and law and order—must be established in the name of the ruler recognized by Britain. Accordingly troops loyal to the Sultan of Muscat have been given modern arms and dispatched inland to "neutralize" the Imam. They appear to have been outstandingly successful. On December 20, 1955, Arab League headquarters in Cairo announced that "British forces" had "occupied Naswa, capital of the kingdom of Oman, and forced the king and his family to flee."

In 1954, the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait received, respectively, 260 and 217 million dollars in oil royalties. In disposing of these vast fortunes they were accountable only to themselves. Yet for all their millions, King Saud and Sheikh Sir Abdullah Salim es-Subah are less fortunate than many relatively humble Arab rulers and leaders: they possess no "nationalist" shock-absorber with which to bear the brunt of social discontent; they must face their subjects unfortified by foreign bogies; they are all too obviously sovereign and independent, masters in their respective houses, and must brave the abyss now opening ahead of them unaided and alone.

King Saud has bravely tried to improvise. He has proclaimed his conviction that ten million Arab lives should, if necessary, be sacrificed in eradicating Israel. He has accused "the British" of massacre, pillage, and other barbaric behavior in the disputed oasis of Buraimi, on the northwestern border of Oman. He has ostentatiously expelled his father's shrewd British adviser, seventy-year-old St.-John Philby. In the course of the first press conference of his reign, at Jedda in mid-July 1955, he expressed the hope that Southern Arabia would soon be liberated from the British. Yet more and more of his subjects are confiding in one another, and in foreigners they meet, their hope that Arabia will soon be liberated from the locust-like Saudi family.

The late King Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud, founder of the present Saudi state, sought to consolidate his kingdom by taking a wife from every important tribe. Today his male descendants alone number rather more than three hundred. Every one of them is a direct charge on the state budget—the older princes, for whom senior government posts are reserved, receiving $360,000 a year plus the upkeep of their palaces and special allowances when they visit other countries. Prudent members of the royal family salt away a good deal of wealth abroad. Their investments and gold purchases contribute to the prosperity of a flourishing section of the Beirut money market, and a recent Saudi threat to take this custom elsewhere if Lebanon associated with the Baghdad Pact or any other Western-sponsored grouping

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had the desired effect. Newspapers and periodicals in many parts of the Arabic-speaking world are subsidized lest they publicize Saudi extravagance.

Between 1952 and 1954, public health, education, and other social services for this largely illiterate country of four or five millions (the exact figure is anybody's guess) were allotted thirteen million dollars. Reliable figures for 1955 are not yet available, though it is known that "internal security" swallowed up some ninety-five million dollars this last year. Most of this sum was spent on the army, whose role is essentially that of a domestic gendarmerie with the task of keeping the tribes in order; but about eight million dollars went to tribal sheikhs and other notables in the form of direct payments in return for keeping the peace.

Blessed with neither his father's outstanding strength of character nor the unchallengeable allegiance he commanded, the present ruler, King Saud ibn Abdul-Aziz, is compelled to purchase the loyalty of his relatives and sheikhs by raising their allowances and subsidies year by year, as well as increasing his military budget and acquiescing in a degree of corruption in official circles unparalleled even in the Levant states. All this imposes a cumulative strain on his resources and when, as has happened twice in recent years, expenditure overtakes revenue, government employees and local merchants supplying the royal family have to go unpaid, and educational and development funds are raided. It is the multi-millionaire monarch's efforts to make ends meet that have driven him to the undignified expedients of entering the tanker business and attempting by force and bribery to acquire the oasis of Buraimi.

In his tanker venture King Saud's mentor is the Greek-Argentinian ship owner Aristotle Socrates Onassis. As yet only one tanker —though it is the largest in the world—sails under the Saudi flag, but the aim is to build up a fleet of about thirty to compete with American and British operators in shipping oil from Arabia to Western Europe—if "compete" is the word. The new Saudi-Onassis tanker company (the Saudis are the major shareholders) was fortified at birth with a royal decree granting its vessels preference over all but those of the Arabian-American Oil Company, the producing company, which carries about half the total volume of oil shipped; and even Aramco has been given to understand by the Saudis that its fleet, too, will ultimately be elbowed out.

THE Buraimi oasis, beneath which are thought to be important oil deposits, consists of a group of eight impoverished villages on the northeastern fringe of the largely uncharted "Empty Quarter" (Rub el-Khali) of Arabia. Six of its villages acknowledged until recently the nominal suzerainty of the British-protected Sheikh of Abu-Dhabi, and two that of the Sultan of Muscat. But when, in August 1952, a Saudi emissary arrived with an escort of forty warriors and a caravan laden with gold sovereigns, ball-point pens, cigarette lighters, and food, Buraimi's 9,000 inhabitants were, for the most part, fairly easily persuaded to switch their allegiances. British-led Arab mercenaries recruited in nearby Persian Gulf sheikhdoms were dispatched against the Saudis, while RAF Vampire jet fighters put on a show overhead, and a long-drawn-out Anglo-Saudi dispute ensued. King Saud formally accused the British of "massacring innocents and pillaging their homes and inflicting barbaric treatment on men and women." The British government accused King Saud of attempting to win over the brother of the Sheikh of Abu-Dhabi with a bribe of eighty million dollars. The efforts of an international arbitration tribunal in Geneva broke down when, according to the British Foreign Office, the Saudi representative, Sheikh Yusef Yassin, tried to bribe its members. There, for the moment, the matter rests, though the Saudi government has threatened to take it up with the Security Council.

Nor is the Buraimi dispute the only cause of the present Anglo-Saudi warm war. The Saudis have long been irritated by British attempts—as they see it—to dominate the Arab world by building up the power, and

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if possible extending the dominions of, the Hashemite royal family (now installed in Iraq and Jordan), which Abdul-Aziz expelled from the Hejaz thirty years ago. The late King Abdullah of Jordan made little effort to conceal his hope that one day his Arab Legion would be strong enough to march south and reconquer his Arabian patrimony, though far from encouraging him, as the Saudis suspected, his British advisers firmly vetoed his irredentist plans. Since Abdullah's death, and despite the deposition of his unbalanced anti-British son Talal, the tide in Jordan, even in some royal quarters, has steadily turned against Britain and in favor of a reconciliation with the Saudis, but Jordan's economic dependence on Britain has naturally operated in favor of the *status quo*.

The Baghdad Pact, as a result of which Iraq is now receiving a dangerous quantity of American and British arms, brought matters to a head, and Saudi dollars are now being spent on anti-Western and anti-Hashemite (even republican!) propaganda in both Iraq and Jordan. Jordan, the weaker of the two, is receiving the greater attention, though not quite so much as Whitehall officials, to cover their discomfiture over the December riots and now the firing of General Glubb, try to make out. The Cairo junta is reportedly willing, if it gets the Western aid it is holding out for, to share with King Saud the cost of paying Jordan an annual subsidy to replace that which she receives from Britain so as to enable her to cut her British tow-rope and enter the Egyptian-Saudi-Syrian neutralist alliance. The magnetism of the resultant bloc would be such that Iraq's gravitation towards it, and her abrogation of the flimsy Baghdad Pact, would only be a matter of time.

THE very word Saudi has come in recent years to be associated to such an extent with extravagance, irresponsibility, corruption, and dissolution that the Western world tends to forget that for millions of Moslems from whom the facts of the situation are concealed, King Saud is doubly important as ruler of the holy places of Islam and nominal head of the Wahabi sect. Wahabi puritanism and piety are renowned—and, generally, recoiled from, as too uncompromisingly austere—throughout the Moslem world. And indeed, more than 90 per cent of King Saud's subjects still lead lives as primitive, as compulsorily austere, as the tenets of Wahabism require. In certain areas "vigilantes" of the Wahabi Ikhwan, a brotherhood founded by the late King Abdul-Aziz, may still take such action as they deem appropriate against humble citizens of the kingdom found drinking alcohol, smoking, or playing music in public. Those who break the fast of Ramadhan may be manacled and imprisoned. Women are denied "human rights" considered elementary in most countries on earth.

In mid-June 1955, it was announced in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, that women would henceforth be forbidden to visit other countries, even on medical grounds and even if accompanied by their husbands (the previous proviso). All girls' schools, it was also officially stated, were to be closed (there were only a few, anyhow, opened in recent years), and male Saudi Arabians would be permitted to study abroad only in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, all foreign newspapers and magazines containing pictures were to be banned. The aim, it was frankly admitted in Saudi official quarters, was to insulate Arabian society from Western example and influence, social and political. Palace circles, alarmed by a strike of oil workers and the distribution of leaflets signed "National Reform Front," denouncing royal extravagance and tyranny, were anxious to stem the rising tide of enlightenment lest it erode the foundations of their rule.

How does the virus of social and political discontent seep through the baffles and filters of so absolute a regime? Partly, as in Yemen and Aden, through the agency of merchants and their Beirut- and Cairo-educated sons, the latter constituting the nucleus of the new, articulate, but politically under-privileged professional and military middle class;

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partly in the wake of American oilmen and of the workers Aramco has brought in from other, more advanced, Arab states; and partly with the aid of the radio. The masses are still too ignorant and apathetic to count as a serious political force, but King Saud's penchant for titivating them with xenophobic outbursts, and his reliance upon religious obscurantism to perpetuate their fatalism and political apathy, plays into the hands of spiritual dignitaries hostile to Western Christian—in this context American—penetration of the Islamic Holy Land and genuinely shocked by royal dissoluteness. Such dignitaries still have a greater influence over the sedentary masses (though not over the nomadic tribes, whose significance, however, is dwindling fast) than any other potential leaders, and should ever a middle-class revolutionary group—say, a committee of army officers on the Egyptian model—enlist them as allies, King Saud's days would be numbered.

TINY Kuwait, too, has an absolute ruler flanked by a fairly voracious family, but he is distinguished by a genuine desire to uplift his people, even to the extent of providing them with the externals of a Western welfare state. The total population of about 200,000 (including 50,000 recently arrived non-Kuwaitis) is concentrated almost entirely in and around the one town, and there can scarcely be a family in the state that has not derived some benefit from the oil boom.

Kuwait now has a supply of drinkable water—filtered sea-water—for the first time in its history (there are no wells in the territory, which is entirely desert, and water has hitherto been imported by dhow from the Shatt el-Arab, the common estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates, fifty miles away). A sixteen-million-dollar sewage system has been built. Superbly equipped hospitals, a mobile clinic, and a sanatorium offer free treatment to all who require it. Forty schools have been opened, a third of them for girls: more is being spent on education in Kuwait than in Saudi Arabia, whose population is thirty times bigger.

Teachers, doctors, technicians, and clerical workers have had to be brought into Kuwait from outside, and their influence, as well as the education available to the rising generation, has opened the eyes of a now vociferous section of Kuwaiti society to the fact that, pampered as they are by their new social services, they are still autocratically governed, subject occasionally to the whims of members of the ruling family who are less enlightened than their Sheikh, and denied any say in the disposal of oil royalties. This last point, Kuwaitis argue, may not be of great importance at the moment, but if the present Sheikh were liquidated by one of his relatives or by an external agency, they might find themselves reduced to the condition of their Saudi Arabian neighbors.

Iraq's royal family has a long-standing feud with the rulers of Kuwait, but Kuwaitis are most afraid, today, of King Saud. Learning recently that signatures were being collected in Kuwait for a petition to the Sheikh requesting the establishment of representative institutions, and that the well-intentioned Sheikh was expected in palace circles to concede at least the election of a state advisory council, King Saud addressed him an urgent warning against such steps. The Sheikh has consequently modified his attitude and forbidden "political agitation"—reportedly because he fears Saudi military intervention.

In his message to the Sheikh, King Saud said: "Once they develop, popular movements undermine the foundations of established governments." He may yet prove to have coined his own epitaph.

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FROM SYNAGOGUE TOWARD YESHIVA

Institutionalized Cult or Congregations of the Learned?

EMANUEL RACKMAN

THE synagogue was once a building where men met to pray and study; today it is an "institution," often more social than religious. The rabbi was once a scholar-saint; now he is usually a "professional," a clergyman. Thoughtful Orthodox Jews in America have tried to resist the modern transformation of the rabbi into a religious functionary, but, paradoxically enough, they have often found themselves adding momentum to the new trend in the very act of seeking to reverse it. Orthodoxy, however, has shown a deeper appreciation of the true meaning of rabbi and synagogue in Jewish tradition than have Conservatism and Reform. Setting its face resolutely against the present cult of synagogue and minister in Jewish life, it is trying to recover for the rabbi his old primacy as teacher and man of learning, and through him and the Jewish school to restore Jewry to its old role as a "nation of priests and a holy people."

IN ITS earliest beginnings (in Babylon) the synagogue was nothing more than a facility for group worship, a makeshift substitute, presumably, for the Temple which had been destroyed. But the synagogue did not disappear with the Temple's restoration. On the contrary, during the days of the Second Commonwealth there were four or five hundred synagogues in Jerusalem alone, and a chapel for prayer was added to the new Temple itself. The synagogue of that day was owned by the city or village in which it was located and governed by the city's seven democratically elected elders. Title to the building was vested in the inhabitants of the city; the elders might sell or otherwise dispose of it only in the presence of the assembled citizenry, and provided that another house of worship had been made ready to take its place and the proceeds of the sale had been earmarked for the purchase of more sacred objects.

To "operate" it, this synagogue-building only needed the help of ten men whose job it was to be available at all times for a religious service when any worshipper came for prayer. Sometimes the community also provided a cantor and sexton; very rarely did it provide a rabbi. Though he might use the building as a member of the community, the rabbi was never a synagogue functionary. (In this connection it is interesting to note that the Israeli Ministry of Religions recently published a volume on synagogue matters in that country which, while it deals with everything from architecture to cantorial music, makes no mention at all of the rabbi.)

But the synagogue was not only a house of worship. Lectures and sermons were delivered there; it served as a school building for young and old, and as the courthouse where oaths were administered; notices of lost and found articles were posted in its halls. It was the place in which punishments were meted out, charity distributed, and the

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THE boom in synagogue building is perhaps the most striking feature of the postwar American Jewish scene. (Last December and February William Schack discussed its architectural and aesthetic side.) EMANUEL RACKMAN here questions the whole tendency of American Judaism to exalt communal worship and the preaching rabbi over traditional Jewish learning and the teaching rabbi. Author of *Israel's Emerging Constitution* (1955) and a regular contributor to these pages, Rabbi Rackman heads Congregation Shaaray Tefile in Far Rockaway and teaches political science at Yeshiva University. His article "Can We Moderns Keep the Sabbath?" appeared in our issue of September 1954.

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dead eulogized; public affairs were debated inside its walls, and travelers would find food and lodging there; occasionally it also provided the place for holding the circumcision ceremony.

The synagogue was indeed a "center"—but not a center where the secular-social rubbed shoulders uneasily with the ritual-religious as today; the social life of the community was also its religious life—religion and society were almost indistinguishably one. And what was the role of the rabbi in all this bustle and hum of activity? A strictly unofficial, almost casual one. Even when a rabbi participated in these functions—and his presence was in fact indispensable to some of them—he usually did so as a volunteer. And indeed the voluntary character of the rabbi in historic Judaism is one of its noblest features.

THE rabbi's role in classical Judaism was determined primarily by a need felt very early on to prevent the surrogates of God from exploiting their position for personal aggrandizement. Abraham, Judaism's first teacher, suffered no man to feel that he "had made Abraham rich." All institutional religions of course face this problem, but Judaism was perhaps the first to recognize it and take steps toward its solution. The rabbi, however, came into prominence rather late in Jewish history. Originally it was the priests and levites who acted as religious ministrants, and though the Bible provided for the support of the priestly classes through the institution of the tithe and heave-offering, the Talmud hedged round all statutory gifts and taxes with so many conditions and restrictions that their delivery was in effect voluntary. A Jew was required to set the tithe gifts aside, thus learning the discipline of self-denial, but if he chose to let them rot, there was no one to stop him. Priests and levites were even prohibited from helping farmers at the harvest, lest the farmer feel morally bound to "pay" his helpers directly with the appropriate offerings.

But this was not the only measure taken to limit priestly power and privilege. Perhaps in reaction against the funerary role of Egypt's priests and their intense preoccupation with the dead, and fearful of priestly exploitation of the gullibility of the bereaved, Israel's priests were so completely excluded from participation in the funeral rites that they were considered unclean if they so much as ventured into a room where a corpse lay. The only corpse of a non-relative that they were permitted to touch was that of a nameless, heirless pauper. Fear, too, of the extensive land holdings of the Egyptian priesthood—whom even Joseph could not expropriate—may have been behind the Torah's denial to the priestly caste of any share in the Promised Land. The fact that the priests were also expected to act as judges in matters of family law restricted their right to marry. Subsequently the Talmud imposed some of these same disabilities on lay judges who were not of the priestly caste. The priests did, however, get some benefit from animal offerings, but they could hardly grow rich on this since the gifts had to be eaten almost at once and under very restricted conditions.

A further safeguard against the evils of priestly privilege was the fact that Judaism was an exoteric rather than an esoteric religion, in which the law was promulgated, taught, and interpreted by all. Would that every man in the camp of Israel were a prophet, exclaimed Moses.

But in the course of time these safeguards proved inadequate to the task for which they had been designed. Particularly in the exercise of their judicial function, the priests contrived to overcome their legal disabilities, and we find them being denounced over and over again by the Prophets for aligning themselves with the rich and against the poor. Nor did they remain content with priesthood alone, but attempted to usurp political power as well. Moses, in assigning the priestly office to his brother Aaron and the "secular," military leadership to his disciple Joshua, had implicitly declared his opposition to a merger of these two functions. But perhaps the most serious consequence of the growth of priestly power and influence was that it led the priests to neglect

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their duty as custodians and expounders of the Law. It was mainly for this reason that the rabbi came into prominence, inheriting not only the responsibilities of the priest but his disabilities as well. From the beginning, the rabbis were clearly determined to guard against the tendencies that had corrupted the priesthood; they especially made it clear that learning was of the essence—a bastard with learning, they declared, ranked higher than an ignorant high priest. Moreover, the rabbis refused to arrogate to themselves even the few privileges which the priests had enjoyed. They ruled that no one must profit by his pursuit of Torah. If the rabbi did perform a ritualistic service, he could lawfully be compensated only for the time he had given and for the loss he had sustained by being taken away from his non-rabbinic vocation, whatever it might be. The same rule also applied to cantors or readers of the Law, who, because their service to the congregation was rendered on the Sabbath, could only be paid for such time as they spent in preparation prior to the Sabbath.

CENTURIES before the Protestant development of the idea of a non-professional clergy, Judaism was putting it into practice. This idea found its most vivid expression later on among the Jews of Eastern Europe. Every Jewish community in East Europe supported at least one rabbi, but in each there were scores of others, also ordained and equally learned in the Law, who chose not to make the Torah their "trade." The yeshiva student, preparing himself for the rabbinate, looked forward to nothing better than to devote his life to study for its own sake (*Torah li'shmah*), rather than for the sake of a livelihood.

The Talmud mentions no fewer than a hundred rabbis who were artisans by profession. In fact, the Talmudic rabbi was "the true successor of the Judean prophet and the Pharisaic scribe, retaining absolute financial independence." During the Middle Ages, rabbis occasionally were able to become influential advisors or counsellors in the courts of kings, but their more learned colleagues did not on that score hesitate to deny them rabbinical authority. Generally, the Jews objected to the office of "chief rabbi" (a creation of the state), and they regarded holders of the office as government agents seeking to strengthen royal control. The claim of a rabbi to leadership, they felt, should derive from his learning and personal piety, and on these points they preferred the judgment of the people (sometimes expressed through elected representatives) to the judgment of the state. The Jewish community was always democratically organized—even by modern standards. Men of wealth and learning, of course, were prominent among community leaders, but there were carefully established voting procedures, and the lay leaders who chose the rabbi reckoned only with piety and scholarship. Moreover, while sanctions, whether of a religious or secular nature, could be invoked against the rabbi for malfeasance in his judicial character, his *spiritual* authority was based principally on popular confidence. There was no trace of the professional or charismatic priesthood in the rabbinate.

Even more unequivocally than Protestantism, Talmudic Judaism rejected the distinction between laity and clergy. A rabbi could do nothing prohibited to a layman, nor could he ignore any of the obligations binding on the layman. In his official capacity, he had no greater powers than any layman learned in the Law—that is, he could give instruction in a particular situation, but always on the basis of his knowledge of the Law. Rabbis seldom conducted religious services—even a funeral was not regarded as a service. Daily and Sabbath services were led by laymen—cantors or readers. Very often the rabbi did not even attend the synagogue: a quorum of men would come to his house and pray there. Nor did rabbis ever *solemnize* marriages, for marriage in Judaism was not a sacrament requiring a cleric's participation. The groom and the bride and the witnesses were the only necessary parties—provided they knew what to say and do during the ceremony. The only power entrusted to the rabbi which was denied the layman was the

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power to ordain other rabbis, but the latter's competence extended to matters of Jewish law alone and a rabbi's authority ultimately depended on its acceptance by the community. Even in litigation the parties to the suit might stipulate that the judges need not be ordained rabbis or scholars, and in general many a layman would resolve questions of Jewish law for himself, trusting to his own familiarity with the sources.

EVERYWHERE we look, then, we find that for almost two millennia to be a rabbi meant nothing—or nothing else—than to be a pious Jew learned in the Law. Like any one else, a rabbi might lead the services, but this would be determined by his singing, not by his position. Similarly, he might deliver sermons, but only because he was a skilled preacher. His principal functions, and the only ones for which his ordination constituted *prima facie* evidence of qualification, were to teach the Law and to resolve legal questions for those who *voluntarily* sought his guidance. To help him fulfill these functions a community or a congregation might retain him in an official, salaried capacity, but even then he regarded it his major responsibility to establish a school—a yeshiva—in which he himself taught. Of course, the rabbis to whom historic religious questions were referred, or whose religious decisions—*responsa*—had a vital bearing on community affairs, sometimes became involved in the political, social, and economic strife of the community. But their major role remained that of the teacher. While the best of their students may have become rabbis who in turn founded new yeshivas or succeeded to the leadership of the already existing ones, the majority of the students, returned—whether ordained or not—to Jewish community life, taking their place as learned citizens. And they, too, devoted their leisure time to study.

The change that has occurred in the rabbi's character and function in modern times was preceded by a change in the nature and place of the synagogue in Jewish life. Diaspora Jewry was always faced with the problem of what constituted the "Jewish community." Was it all the Jews living in a particular city, or only those who made up a given congregation? In the United States, where one could choose not to affiliate himself with any religious group at all, it was inevitable that the congregation should replace the community at large as the nucleus of Jewish organization, for only through the positive act of joining a congregation did one identify himself as a member of the Jewish community. The synagogue thus became the focal point, almost the determinant, of community membership, instead of the simple community facility it had been.

With the synagogue now so important, the American rabbi found himself responsible for its success, which was conceived in terms of its ability to "make Jews" out of more and more people—that is, to increase its membership. As the head of an institution, the rabbi's duties became more numerous, the talents he required more diverse, his motives more worldly, and his Jewish learning less impressive. As a professional group, rabbis measured up to other professionals in versatility and erudition, but unfortunately they found themselves reduced to ministers who were forced to covet the loyalty and good will of the laymen they served. Public relations became an integral part of their job, and pastoral work and social service an integral part of public relations. The sermon became their principal instrument of attracting attention and support; membership drives and building expansion were necessary for greater emoluments of office; even schools for the young became bait for congregational membership. Everything seemed to be subsumed under this one overriding, tyrannical responsibility of public relations.

That the synagogue in America has become an institution catering more to social than to religious needs does not mean that it is performing a function entirely inconsistent with its traditional character. After all, it is not at all the social role *per se* of the synagogue that is the trouble, but the feebleness of the over-all religious purpose and meaning that should suffuse the syna-

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gogue's social functions. Moreover, according to Jewish theology, the preservation of the Jewish people *qua* people is itself a religious value—a point Marshall Sklare overlooks in his excellent study, *Conservative Judaism*—and the modern synagogue helps to do that. What demands criticism, however, is the damage done by the modern synagogue to the role and personality of the rabbi, who is the sole surviving carrier of the religious heritage in most congregations. And it seems distressingly clear also that the synagogue is dropping Jewish law overboard like so much ballast in order to save itself as an institution. To sanction driving an automobile on the Sabbath because more and more worshippers living in suburban areas find it impossible to walk to *shul* is to sacrifice the Sabbath to the synagogue.

To prevent the institutionalized synagogue from turning Judaism into a temple cult and the rabbi into a public relations man, Orthodoxy today is transferring its prime emphasis from the synagogue to the school—preferably to a yeshiva. This shift of emphasis is in part a kind of holding operation, aimed at recreating an elite of scholars who will preserve Judaism through a period of agnosticism and non-observance. But the more immediate hope of the program is to train a substantial body of people literate enough in Torah to demonstrate by their way of life that a fully traditional Judaism can stand up to the intellectual and emotional challenges of our day. Such a program represents a clear-cut departure from the aims of those reformers who made the synagogue and its rabbi the Jewish counterpart of church and minister. If a significant number of Jews do not respond to this attempt to restore them to their traditional role of active participants, as a "holy people" of scholars, in Jewish religious life and leadership, if they are content to remain a passive, more or less ignorant flock superintended by their pastor in a narrowly limited religious sphere, and "superintending" him in all other spheres, then Judaism must eventually find itself transformed into an esoteric body of doctrines: in other words, it will become the very kind of religion that it repudiated so forcefully in its own beginnings and throughout its history.

The question of primacy as between synagogue and school is not a new one in American Jewish community life. There have been occasions when American rabbis even opposed the establishment of Jewish day schools in their communities for fear that these yeshivas would reduce the registration of their own Hebrew schools and thus deflate synagogue membership. Today, however, though the day schools seek the cooperation of neighboring synagogues, they do not hesitate to assert their superiority to them in the hierarchy of Jewish institutional life.

But there is another factor at work here as well. The largest Orthodox rabbinical seminary in America will soon graduate one hundred rabbis every year, and even if many Conservative synagogues employ these new rabbis, at least half will almost certainly enter the teaching profession or Jewish social service. Hundreds of such teaching rabbis will be available for supplementary work as spiritual leaders of small neighborhood synagogues in every section of the country, and it will be to their interest to encourage the process of decentralization and to resist the transformation of their own modest synagogues into mammoth enterprises. As leaders of small synagogues, they will be able to maintain closer relations with their congregants, and because the size of the membership, it is hoped, will no longer be the measure of rabbinical "success," they will be free to exert a much more challenging and effective spiritual influence than the rabbi who must say nothing that will offend his congregation. They will be volunteers serving in the synagogue without pay or at token salaries—a fact which will eliminate the pressure, this time from the rabbi's side, for the large membership needed to provide him with a "professional's" salary. Instead of using the school maintained by the synagogue as bait for membership, these new rabbis will be free to persuade parents to give their children the best, most extensive

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Jewish education available, such as no synagogue school can hope to provide.

The tendency toward small synagogues is already evident in America. Orthodox leaders seek to establish such synagogues wherever a minimum of ten families desire it. Moreover, it is Orthodoxy's hope and aim to fill these synagogues with men and women whose background in Torah will be virtually on a par with the rabbi's, even though they are engaged in business, medicine, law, engineering, accounting, or what have you. There are already several modern Orthodox synagogues in New York which boast a dozen ordained rabbis in their lay membership and scores of others who have spent ten or more years studying in yeshivas.

THE conflict between the rabbi as scholar and the rabbi as preacher was resolved for a long time among American Jews in favor of the preacher. A generation ago the distinguished pulpit orator was called to the largest congregation and commanded the highest salary. But in our own day there has been a renewed tendency (fostered partly by the fact that so many congregants are college graduates) to esteem a rabbi for his learning rather than for his eloquence.

Among the Orthodox, rabbinical leadership is passing out of the possession of the rabbis of the big synagogues into the hands of those who direct the institutions of learning. And it is the avowed purpose of the heads of the yeshivas to train Jews expert in Bible and Talmud. If he is not to forfeit his leadership, the rabbi who stands at the head of a congregation made up of such members must be a scholar himself. These congregations, in keeping with their orientation toward learning and scholarship and away from the institutionalized cult, are rebelling against the practice of making the synagogue an exclusive center of American Jewish religious life. The synagogue's displacement of the home would be as fatal to Judaism as its displacement of the school. Ideally, the synagogue is the place in which one seeks personal communion with God, and discovers one's identification with *klal Yisrael,* the community of the Jewish people. But there is a whole range of religious experience and obligation which is embraced by the home and the home alone. This crucial side of Jewish life is fast being forgotten in America as more and more homes are de-Judaized and the synagogue clumsily strives to substitute for them.

There is one real hazard in the shift of primacy from synagogue to school. Will it only hasten and promote the divorce of Jewish law from the needs of contemporary life? Will it end up by making Jewish law entirely a matter for schools and academies and unworldly scholars remote from the actual lives of American Jews? The modern synagogue, with all its faults, is part and parcel of the people's life. Can we say the same of the Jewish academy?

It remains to be seen if the yeshiva movement can cope with this danger. The ultimate authority to change and develop Jewish life rests with the people—with all those who are committed to a belief in the divine origin of the Law. Rabbis, as I have pointed out, derive their authority as interpreters of the Law from the people, but this authority can only be conferred by a public literate enough to recognize who is worthy of it. As more and more yeshiva graduates come forward who are both Judaically literate and worldly enough to fill positions in all walks of life—who, that is, are qualified to appreciate the demands of Jewish law as well as the needs of life in the present—a Jewish "general will" may develop, and from this general will those "scholar saints" who possess the religious penetration to perceive the unity of life and Law can derive their authority as the Law's doctors. Such men have appeared in the past. They rose to prominence not because they were rabbis of synagogues or presidents of rabbinical associations or heads of great fund-raising campaigns. Most often they were both rabbis in the communities and teachers in the seminaries. Orthodox Jewry the world over has thus far succeeded only in transferring leadership from the preacher to the scholar; it has still to produce such "scholar saints."

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Now that the passion of the postwar American Jewish community for building "fine edifices" has almost exhausted itself, it may not seem petulant to suggest that the architecture and décor of synagogues are not as important as their spiritual organization. The Talmud, which prescribes meticulously for every phase of personal and social living, is relatively permissive with respect to the establishment of synagogues and the hiring of religious functionaries. Perhaps the Talmud recognized that synagogues are only a means, and divine law does not attempt to fix means in the same way as ends. Precisely for this reason Judaism is not saddled with fixed institutional patterns for church and clergy. And in an age when so much of the antipathy to religion is an antipathy to its bureaucratization and institutionalization, the Jewish rabbinate, by taking up again its old non-institutional role as teacher, can demonstrate how Judaism favors the modern point of view on this as on so many other matters.

THE KHAZAR POET

LEO HABER

The Khazars, a pagan people who lived between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, were converted to Judaism about 740 C.E., following the lead of their king, Bulan II. History says that the king examined Christian, Moslem, and Jewish scholars before choosing the mother religion. The Khazars were wiped out by the Count of Kiev in the 10th century.

We are a nation of Jews; of Jews, I repeat,
converted by the harmful views of a demented king
who for himself seeks no wing of bird or libation.
An odd man, froward, wayward, dignified, intellectual;
not deified (as I've already said) in the way of his forebears,
but tears an idol worshipper to shreds
and would flay a fool sooner than a regicide.
Be my lovely bride, he drooled to the witches' Sabbath.
And the land really stood still far and wide!
Even the court poets stopped to chant chill hymns,
the mealy-mouthed, wary sons of bitches!

Don't believe the slick story that he asked three men of the cloth
to state their case and then chose to cleave to the one
that the others would have as their very own.
That tale has grown with the years, flavored and spiced;
yet to me a baleful one that savors of a poet's enticing plot
to justify the ways of kings to sots.
He merely chose an abstract God, an intellectual triumph,
unseen, unheard, unheralded, shod of all intermediaries,
bereft of all issue, no saints, no ikons, no living tissue,
nothing that a peasant's hand or a poet's mind sees and can touch;
fettered only in phylacteries.

He also chose the hind pursued by the wolves of the world.
Even now the rude Count is at the gate,
bloody battle flag unfurled.
Is it self-hate, self-laceration—
that he should choose to mingle his fate
with the game and not with the hunter?
Let us have a scientific name for this odd pleasure.
With these Jews it's such a common state.

Leo Haber, a young poet who teaches in the high schools of Long Island, appears here in print for the first time. He was born in New York City, in 1927.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE REAL MOLLY GOLDBERG

Baalebosteh of the Air Waves

MORRIS FREEDMAN

FOR twenty-five years the affairs of "The Goldbergs," a fictional Bronx family, occupied the more or less regular attention of a sizable portion of the American public. The saga began on radio in 1929 as a serial, first weekly, then daily, reaching, at its height in the mid-30's, an estimated ten million persons with each broadcast. In 1946, "The Goldbergs" left radio for a Broadway play, *Me and Molly*. The next year Hollywood made a film of the play, entitled *Molly*, and the family began its television career, during which its audience occasionally numbered as many as forty million per appearance. The last few years have been rocky, however, the program shifting networks, changing from a daily to a thrice weekly to a weekly schedule, and appearing once as a summer replacement for Bishop Sheen. For a number of seasons it was off the air altogether. Now it has returned to television on film.

ALTHOUGH I never took to the serial on radio, the very first time I saw the family on television I was drawn into its affairs and remained a faithful fan up to its last few months as a live program, when I forgot more and more to turn it on. I wondered whether my own changing response was part of what seemed a more widespread attitude, and to find out about this and about the program generally, I arranged not long ago to talk with Mrs. Gertrude Berg. It is she who created the family and has always written the scripts and played Molly, the matriarchal central figure.

We were to meet on a Thursday afternoon at the Central Plaza Hotel, on Second Avenue, where the show held its rehearsals. I got down early, had a plate of blintzes at Ratner's, which adjoins the hotel, and went in to meet Mrs. Berg. In the narrow corridor next to the elevator I noticed a bulletin board listing the rehearsal halls of several other television shows, including Studio One and the Kraft Theater. "Molly" was waiting in a small room off the foyer of a ballroom on the third floor. I was taken there by a short, middle-aged woman who introduced herself as Mrs. Fanny Merrill, and who, I found out later, has been Mrs. Berg's factotum since 1929.

Television tends both to shorten and fatten one's figure and on it Mrs. Berg looks the epitome of circularity. Only her eyes, which narrow alertly, and her wide mouth are horizontals. But in person, while retaining a certain impressive solidity, she appears younger, smaller, less matronly. She had on a black dress, a black silk scarf, and a huge diamond ring. She was remote at first, her head held back warily, and her speech was careful and quite free of the accent that marks "Molly Goldberg."

SOAP operas come and go, changing with the times, but in a quarter of a century "The Goldbergs" have moved from radio to the stage and on to television without much damage to their original character. MORRIS FREEDMAN here takes us behind the scenes of what is probably the best-known Jewish family in America. A regular contributor to these pages, Mr. Freedman is now teaching at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. His last previous appearance in COMMENTARY was in September 1955, with "Comedian in a Business Suit," an analysis of the humor of Sam Levenson.

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"It's hard to say where I get my ideas for the sketches," she said. "You know, how can any writer tell you how he works? From friends I visit—I have very many everywhere—from the family. Sometimes I build the program around an idea, like the problem of an old widower, sometimes around a character type. If I'm impressed by an actor some place, I'll write a part for him that uses his special quality. That's how I got the original Uncle David; I saw Menasha Skulnik. The same way I've worked Eartha Kitt and Regina Reznick into plots. I want things to look real.

"My sense of Jewishness comes not from my father and mother so much as from my grandparents; I worshipped my grandmother. We scarcely spoke Yiddish at home; my mother came from England. I have vivid memories of visiting my grandparents. I was born and raised in Harlem, and lived in the East Bronx, near Southern Boulevard. I went to Wadleigh High School, in Manhattan. Afterwards I went to Columbia, taking all sorts of courses, but majoring in nothing and not graduating. I like to read everything. Hemingway, Faulkner, Shaw, James, Mann, Joyce, everybody. But I work out the shows myself. It's very gratifying to realize that a creation of yours has become so real for so many people."

We talked a while about some of the individual sketches I had seen. "Ah," she said, her face opening in her broad, unreserved smile, generally turned on during a show to ingratiate herself with another character, or with the audience when lauding vitamin pills or a sewing machine, "you remember some shows better than I do.

"You see, darling, I don't bring up anything that will bother people. That's very important. Unions, politics, fund-raising, Zionism, socialism, inter-group relations, I don't stress them. And, after all, aren't all such things secondary to daily family living? The Goldbergs are not defensive about their Jewishness, or especially aware of it. Rosiely and Sammy are played by Arleen McQuade and Tom Taylor, just average-looking young people, not Jewish. Like so many college boys, Sammy is studying engineering. Jake is not rich; he's only a contractor living in a Bronx apartment and he's not going to go any higher. I keep things average. I don't want to lose friends." She smiled and knotted the ends of her scarf.

"As for the Jewishness," she went on, "you'll notice there's no dialect, just intonation and word order. A question at the end of a statement. 'So you are coming already?' Sometimes it's a matter of literally translating a Yiddish idiom, like 'Throw an eye in the refrigerator.'" I asked about the Orthodox service depicted on one Yom Kippur program. "What else? Where else would the Goldbergs go but to an Orthodox *shul*? It doesn't matter what they do the rest of the year. Certainly, Uncle David would be Orthodox. Anyway, this is what people think Jews do." I remarked that I had been bothered by her plain second cousin's marrying a handsome and rich young man in one series of sketches. "Look around, darling," she said leaning forward and lowering her voice, "and see how many homely girls have good-looking husbands."

As we talked, I could hear persons coming into the room outside. "Excuse me," she said, looking through the door over my shoulder, "it's three o'clock and we must start. Why don't you stay and watch?" She abruptly loosened the belt of her dress, and I went out to the ballroom.

The dimly lit room was hung with elaborate chandeliers. At one end was a raised platform with a canopy over it, enclosed in a bower of artificial palm leaves and flanked by two tall wicker baskets holding artificial calla lilies, the usual arrangement for performing the ceremony at hotel-catered Jewish weddings. Rows of wooden chairs lined the walls. A round, gentle-faced, balding young man, who I learned was Cherney Berg, Mrs. Berg's son and the show's producer, was pasting strips of green tape on the floor; these took the outline of the Goldbergs' apartment. The actors stood around trying out their dialogue on one another. Mrs. Berg minced quickly and heavily into the room, wearing a loud print wrap-around dress with short sleeves. She put her hands well back on her hips, in the stance of a housewife wiping her palms, and brusquely asked one of the actresses why she had come late, nodded indifferently at the answer, her eyes quickly scanning the room, and got down to arranging a group of chairs in the middle of the floor to represent the Goldbergs' furniture.

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The plot this week had to do with a long distance charge to Miami that Jake discovers on his monthly telephone bill just before a family circle meeting. It develops that Muttle (so spelled in the script), the family ne'er-do-well, had made the call at the previous meeting. But when he comes in, he announces that Solly-the-doctor (always so referred to; he is Uncle David's son and physician to the family in all its branches) told him he has "a heart—it murmurs," and he staggers dramatically to a chair. No one wants to ask Muttle about the call. The family, in hushed conclave in the other room, decide to retire him permanently on a weekly pension of $27, to be raised by taxing the fifty-four members of the circle half a dollar a week.

Muttle indignantly refuses the pension, but is not averse to continuing to "borrow." He offers his latest invention (an intricate affair of glass tubes that enables one to drink orange juice right from the fruit), the proceeds of which are to pay off his debts with interest, and reveals, after a sardonic inquiry from Jake, that he paid for the telephone call with $4.85 that he put into the catch-all fruit bowl on the dining room buffet. "I . . . me . . . Muttle would make a long distance telephone call and not pay for it? . . . Then you don't know Muttle. If I had to borrow, if I had to take the money, if I had to . . . I don't know what."

Mrs. Berg pretty well took over things. She announced she would try her lines without the script, evoking several respectful and playful "Oh's." The rehearsal proceeded in spurts and collapses. There was a good deal of ad-libbing. Once Mrs. Berg said, "Come, rest on my Castro Convertible," instead of "sofa," as the script had it, and the cast broke out with a chorus of "hoh-hoh's." "Why not?" she said belligerently. "They gave us the couch for the set." All of the actors had fallen into the Goldbergs' characteristic Yiddish intonation even when not delivering their lines, although only Eli Mintz, who plays Uncle David, speaks that way naturally. Throughout, Mrs. Berg kept rewriting. "Who made a call to Miami?" was changed to "Who in our circle would perchance have someone in Miami to communicate with?" She wrote several lines to get Rosie and Sammy out of the apartment. Instead of climaxing the plot with Muttle's gift of his invention to the family, she switched to the discovery of the money in the fruit bowl.

During one short break, Mrs. Berg joined me. She was flushed and smiling broadly. "Well, darling," she said, sitting down in the adjoining chair and laying her hand on mine, "how do you like it? It's going good?"

THE show I had watched being shaped was typical. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about "The Goldbergs," in view of the program's extended career, was its unemphatic story line and commonplace content, quite the reverse of most soap opera. I remember programs which approached the humdrum so closely that occasionally nothing at all would happen for minutes at a time, no talk or movement; one just stared at a deserted Bronx living room. Other times, Molly just worked away at supper—cutting up a chicken, seasoning and tasting the soup, chopping fish or herring—demonstrating at length her domestic skills. This realism established a context in which one could find oneself unresistingly carried away by whatever familial or communal activity did develop. The proceedings seemed so indifferent to an audience that it was hard to keep one's detachment and not to become part of them.

The plots rarely fell into well-arranged patterns, sometimes being extremely involved and gimmicky, sometimes aimless and diffuse. Often, there would be a long pause for a kind of vaudeville exchange, like the deadpan, hilarious dialogue between Eli Mintz and Menasha Skulnik one night in which the relative prestige of physicians and dentists was debated (Skulnik, playing a brother of Eli Mintz's, had a son who was a dentist). The expected kept being twisted and reversed. There seemed to be at work an almost willful contrariness; Mrs. Berg's uncompromising use of Molly's garrulousness, prying, and need for keeping things astir made one often feel involved in an uncomfortable session of gossip. Mrs. Berg did not hesitate to show unsavory characters in an attractive light, or to show unpleasant aspects of likable ones.

One family dispute revolved around the question of whether a recently married cousin should buy furniture from a relative, regardless of style, rather than from a de-

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partment store, where she could choose freely. The unpleasant persons—loud, self-righteous old-maid cousins—were victorious in championing the bride's freedom, while the sympathetic ones, including Molly, were defeated. Unsparing of herself, Molly spent a half hour once relentlessly pursuing a fellow convalescing patient in a hospital ward, the mother of an eligible young man, in behalf of her frowsy second cousin. She nagged the woman into a relapse—and in the process made my skin crawl. Another time, provoked by Jake's attack on her "mixing in," Molly gave a party for the couples she had been instrumental in getting together. Molly herself was pleased with the sheer bulk of her efforts. "There were some pretty awful messes, clearly shown," Mrs. Berg remarked of this program, "and it was a question whether these could make up for all the good marriages. The happily married couples would have surely been happy in any case; the wretched ones were pushed into their disasters by Molly's pressures." On the other hand, one program was devoted to Molly's upbraiding Sammy for laughing at Rosiely because she looked ridiculous in an evening gown. "Did I teach you ever to laugh at people, to hurt their feelings because they look funny?" asks Molly.

I saw one other session of Muttle's troubles, on Second Avenue, and on the following Tuesday went down to the DuMont Television Center, on East 67th Street, an hour and a half before broadcast time to see the dress rehearsal. The studio occupied one floor, two stories high, of a converted furniture warehouse. The set was along one wall, open to the three cameras and the several sound booms. Technicians, advertising men, photographers, and assorted assistants, most of whom hadn't seen the sketch before, watched the rehearsal attentively, laughing now and then, eliciting appreciative grins from Mrs. Berg when off camera. There were at least thirty persons standing around or handling the equipment. One man had gone to sleep in a lounge chair; the chair was the family's gift to Muttle.

During the pause reserved for the middle commercial, which was on film, Mrs. Berg whipped out of the dress she was wearing, revealing another one underneath, and four men rushed over to the dining room table carrying a large circular board on which was laid out a complete setting, which they hurriedly transferred to the actual table. The changed table setting and Molly's new dress marked the passage of time. The script had been shaped into a neat playlet between Tuesday and Thursday; rehearsals had gone on all day Friday, Saturday, Monday, and on Tuesday afternoon.

At the end of the rehearsal, I wandered on to the set. The strict attention paid to details of furnishing and decorating clearly reflected Mrs. Berg's preoccupation with authenticity. The wallpaper and the furniture were pretentious and shabby. The sofa was indeed a Castro, as the label on the back testified. On the walls hung pictures of Washington and Lincoln, one of Sammy in uniform, and one of a naked baby sprawled on a bear rug. There was an old discolored brown-tone portrait of a family in 19th-century dress—ladies with high collars and elaborate hair arrangements, mustachioed men with spats and intricate watch chains.

Mr. Cherney Berg invited me to join him in the control room during the actual show. There, a flight upstairs, at a long table before a wide window that overlooked the hanging lights and other equipment in the studio, sat the assistant director in front of a panel of switches, the director, a script girl, Mr. Berg, and several others. There were five television screens. The assistant director, who wore earphones and a chest phone, was in constant touch with the three cameramen, and decided at each moment which of the three shots was to be broadcast; the selected shot was shown on the other two screens.

The cast, the directors, and others hugged and congratulated Mrs. Berg at the end of the program; in the group was a bald, sharp-faced gentleman—Mr. Berg. Before leaving the studio Miss McQuade changed from the shapeless wool blouse and skirt and flat heels she was wearing as Rosie to a tight fitting dress and high-heeled thin-strap shoes. Tom Taylor left in the same sports jacket and tan chino trousers he had worn as Sammy, and he drove off in a miniature, fire-engine red, foreign convertible.

As I was leaving the building, my eye was caught by the row of tall, narrow tenement houses across the street, of the type in which one might conceivably find the original of

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the Goldbergs' stage menage. Standing under the modernistic, neon-lighted marquee, looking at those buildings, I suddenly felt how utterly improbable it was that television should catch the quality of life inside, with all its army of engineers and its technical armamentarium.

THE course that led Mrs. Berg herself from just such tenements to the studio is a well-known one, although the precise details are elusive. In talking with her, and even more with Mrs. Merrill, I got the impression that the account they were offering me of Mrs. Berg's career was based on magazine and newspaper stories whose sorting and fixing of the facts they had found convenient. It seems established that Mrs. Berg was born in 1899. Her father, Jacob Edelstein, owned a resort hotel in the Catskills, and she is supposed to have written and performed monologues for its guests. She married Lewis Berg (first name sometimes spelled "Louis") in 1918; he has variously been described as a chemical engineer, a "prosperous sugar technologist," a designer of false teeth, a tax consultant, and an "industrial consultant." In addition to Cherney, in his early thirties, the Bergs have a younger daughter, Harriet, who is married to an army physician.

According to most records, Mrs. Berg went into show business sometime in 1929 when the support of the family fell on her with the burning down of the sugar factory where her husband worked. Her original ambition was to be a radio writer, but she was signed to play Molly after she read aloud her illegible script. (She told one reporter that she had deliberately presented an illegible text so that she would be asked to read it aloud.) The earliest title of her weekly show seems to have been "The Rise of Goldberg," and at the time a critic predicted it would not survive—it was nowhere near as good as "Amos and Andy," he said. In 1931, the show went on a daily basis, for which Mrs. Berg then got $2,000 a week; her weekly check for the radio serial is estimated to have gone as high as $7,500. At least one historian has called "The Goldbergs" the oldest of soap operas; having gone on the air only a short time after "Amos and Andy," which is itself supposed to hold that distinction, it is one of the oldest. Both were fifteen-minute programs, like all soap opera, and for many years "The Goldbergs" followed "Amos and Andy" every night from seven to seven-thirty. Originally, the show was a success story, as its title indicated, recording a Hester Street to Park Avenue rise, with the Goldbergs rapidly reaching the heights during the worst days of the depression. Family life on Park Avenue hardly conforming with common depression reality, Mrs. Berg just as quickly manipulated Jake into a total loss of his fortune, and the family returned to the East Bronx. By the time "The Goldbergs" left radio in 1946, Mrs. Berg had written more than 5,000 scripts.

Mrs. Berg herself lives in a Park Avenue apartment today—a duplex with two bedrooms, living and dining rooms, kitchen and study—while working on her program; her main establishment is a twelve-room house in Bedford Hills, in Westchester County, next door to Tallulah Bankhead. Mrs. Merrill offered to conduct me about the apartment. The bathroom upstairs had two stacks of books on a laundry hamper, among which was *The Bostonians* by James, with dog-eared pages. The whole place was elegantly decorated, the study paneled in wood and lined with shelves crammed with books. "All antiques," Mrs. Merrill explained, "but you should see Bedford Hills, even more antiques, and many more books." Perhaps because Mrs. Berg uses the apartment only as an elaborate office, it seemed to me to have the air of a frigid, unchanging, neat stage set. "You know," Mrs. Merrill remarked, "every place Mrs. Berg goes she is greeted as 'Molly.' People want her to sign autographs as 'Molly Goldberg' rather than Gertrude Berg. She signs both names."

How far in spirit the Goldbergs have traveled is evident from their characterization in the 30's, when they were Jewish "greenhorns." An early publicity photograph shows Mrs. Berg, thinner and younger, in long print dress and kerchief, standing over a Friday night table on which are Sabbath candles; on the wall in back of her are two large photographs, a man in skullcap with a white beard, a woman in kerchief. The radio scripts were written in straight Milt Gross dialect; Mrs. Berg once reported that she had been inspired by Gross. "You got vone bad habit, Molly!" reads one speech by Jake. "You alvays like to give to everyting a

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tvist. I'm talking about Mendel, so she brings in vid Mr. Bloom! I don't care vat you say, Molly, Mendel ain't treating me like a partner. By you is alleright he should aggrawate me and make out from me a notting, yet." To which Molly answers: "Did I said like dat, ha?" When Mr. Kerrigan, the Irish janitor of the apartment house and a regular figure in the Goldbergs' tenement life, visits their apartment, Molly has him sit down and asks Sammy to "put on your new *talles,*" and to recite portions of his Bar Mitzvah speech for him: "Not de whull ting—unly a liddle bit from de front and a liddle bit from de beck." Considering that Sammy was in 1931 preparing for his Bar Mitzvah, and that in 1954, almost a quarter of a century later, he was only nineteen, "The Goldbergs" might be said to have a kind of comic-strip changelessness. The shift of Sammy's ambition from physician to engineer is, then, a keeping up with the "styles," something like Little Orphan Annie's changing hairdo.

With all their documentation, the Goldbergs purvey a special form of unreality. The program has never really got away from its origin as an immigrant epic. For non-immigrants in the early days, "The Goldbergs" fitted into the category of *Abie's Irish Rose,* Gallagher and Shean, Chico Marx, Jack Pearl, all of whom offered their foreign quaintness for comedy, ingratiating themselves with supposedly lovable and exotic antics. Today "The Goldbergs" is a hybrid, weirdly mating that past and the present. Mrs. Berg simply is not the slim, trim contemporary matron, her successor in today's family idealization; she looks and carries herself like that matron's immigrant mother. One knows she isn't what she pretends to be, just as one feels Little Orphan Annie is a superannuated midget. We enter an oddly convincing milieu with the Goldbergs, but by way of a crazy, mixed-up time machine: the people and their concerns and their setting belong to the 20's and 30's, but we keep being told the time is the present. There is too much straining after "naturalism." Mrs. Berg's language, cute as it always is, and right as it sometimes is, is contrived to meet outmoded expectations. For one thing, television audiences today do not find the portrait of a domineering, sheltering matriarch exactly comfortable. For another, it may be pointless and somewhat tedious now to insist, however mildly, on the family's Jewishness. What has saved the program from comic strip flatness altogether is Mrs. Berg's own, very real appearance and her frequent instinct for a timeless, "literary" detail of dialogue or conflict.

Yet it would be inaccurate to suggest that Mrs. Berg has been totally unaware either of the requirements of her audience or of the "artistic" inadequacies of her epic. She shifted once, from her humble, dialect-speaking Jews to nearly middle-class, "correctly," even stiltedly, speaking ones. From "Amos and Andy" and Smith and Dale she moved in the direction of Kober and Odets.

When I talked with her, she was actually planning to transfer the Goldbergs to a suburban community. Since my visit she has been on various television dramatic shows simply as another actress. In one play, she was a middle-aged widow in Los Angeles who meets and marries a middle-aged tailor after placing a lonely hearts advertisement; in another, she played a well-to-do widow so tied to her late husband that she received "telephone calls" from him and was able to consider remarriage only when shocked back to reality by her rather brutal family. She carried off these characterizations with the skill, warmth, and plausibility—and none of the anachronisms—that she brought to Molly; as usual, she was superior to her material. (In these productions, no point was made of the ethnic origins of the characters.)

Her present role is at least as representative as her old one was for a time, and it is more closely adjusted to what she actually is today—a middle-aged, independently wealthy matron—than to what she imagines she might have been if she had taken the fork leading to Bronx domesticity. And she has cast away in these roles her often irritating vaudeville display of cuteness. Since her great achievement has always been of a documentary sort (in a sense she merely explored all the possibilities implicit in her real-life appearance and bearing), she may be on the way to creating a latter-day Molly Goldberg. Perhaps she will be more successful in resuscitating a used up character than most writers have been. She has sociology, at least, on her side, for there must be many Molly Goldbergs about; the problem is finding one in her natural habitat.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

MYSTIC DRAMA OF JERUSALEM

From the Zohar

THE Jewish mystical writings of the Middle Ages, and especially the *Zohar,* the Cabbalist commentary on the Pentateuch, present a drama wherein the phenomena of worldly life serve as mere symbols of what takes place between the human soul and its Creator, between the Community of Israel and the Holy One. In this drama, Zion and Jerusalem play a great role. Their past glory, their fall and hoped-for rise, are intricately bound up with the destiny of Israel and of the world. Jerusalem destroyed causes a critical disunity in the whole of the universe; the restoration of Jerusalem will bring about harmony even within the Deity.

The following passages from the *Zohar* illustrate the typical blend of the rational and the supernatural, the heavenly and the earthly, which is Jerusalem. The drama of the fall and the restoration takes place simultaneously on two levels, one upper, one lower. In the condensed rendition of these passages from the Aramaic, culled from various parts of the *Zohar,* the Soncino Press translation (London, 1949), by H. Sperling and Maurice Simon, has been consulted.—NAHUM N. GLATZER

ONE day the friends were walking with Rabbi Simeon. He said: "I see all other nations raised and Israel humiliated. Why so? Because the King, God, has sent away the Queen, Israel, and has put the handmaid, the alien Crown, in her place." He wept and continued: "A king without a queen is no king; if the king is attached to the handmaid of the queen, where is his glory? The handmaid rules over Zion as the Queen once ruled over it. But one day the Holy One will restore the Queen to her rightful place; who shall then rejoice like the King and the Queen?—the King because he has returned to her, and has separated from the handmaid, and the Queen because she is reunited to the King. Hence it is written: *Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion* (Zech. 9:9).

* * *

THE souls of the Lower Paradise at times go forth and roam about the world. They behold those suffering who have been afflicted for the sake of their belief in the unity of God. The souls return, and report to the Messiah what they have seen. The Messiah weeps aloud; he enters the Hall of the Afflicted, and there takes upon himself entirely the pain and the sufferings of Israel. So long as Israel was in the Holy Land, the service in the Sanctuary and the offerings averted afflictions from the world; now it is the Messiah who spares mankind.

* * *

THE Messiah shall reveal himself first in the land of Galilee: it was here in the Holy Land that the destruction began. All the rulers will gather to wage war against him, and even from among Israel some evil ones will join the battle against the Messiah. The Messiah lifts up his eyes and he sees the Patriarchs standing at the ruins of God's Sanctuary. He sees Mother Rachel with tears in her eyes. The Holy One tries to comfort her, but she refuses to be comforted.

The day will come when a fire shall flame in Great Rome [Constantinople] and it will consume the towers and turrets; many among the great and powerful shall perish in it. The rulers will take counsel together and issue decrees for the destruction of Israel. The Messiah sees an image of the destruction of the Sanctuary and of all the martyred saints. The saintly fathers will then rise and gird

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the Messiah with weapons of war—Abraham at his right, Isaac at his left, Jacob in front of him. Whereupon the Messiah will take ten garments of holy zeal and go into hiding for forty days; no eye shall be permitted to look at him.

The Holy One will behold the Messiah thus attired, and He will take him and kiss him upon his brow and crown him with the crown that He Himself wore when the children of Israel were freed from the Egyptian bondage; with this same crown will He crown King Messiah.

Then the Messiah will enter one of the sanctuaries and there see the angels who are called "the mourners of Zion" weeping over the destruction of the Holy Temple. They will give him a robe of deep red that he may begin his work of vengeance.

After having been crowned on high, the Messiah will be crowned on earth, by the grave of Mother Rachel, to whom he will offer happy tidings; now she will let herself be comforted and will rise and kiss him.

His army will consist of those who are diligent in the study of the Torah, but there will be only a few of these in the world. Yet his army will gain strength: through the merit of the children at school and through the merit of the infants for whose sake the Divine Presence dwells in the midst of Israel in exile. It is the young who will give strength to the Messiah.

That day, the Messiah will begin to gather the exiles from one end of the world to the other. From that day on, the Holy One will perform for Israel all the signs and wonders which He performed in Egypt.

* * *

After the destruction of the Temple, blessings were withheld from the world, both on high and here below, so that the baser forces were strengthened and could exercise control over Israel who had sinned. When the Temple was destroyed and the people driven into dispersion, the Divine Presence left her home to accompany Israel into exile. Before leaving, the Divine Presence took one last look at the Holy of Holies and the places where the Priests and the Levites worshipped.

Entering the lands of dispersion, the Divine Presence saw how the people were oppressed and tyrannized over by the heathen nations. But in the days to come, the Holy One will recall the Community of Israel, and the Divine Presence will return from exile. The Holy One will speak to the Community of Israel: *Shake thyself from the dust, arise, O captive Jerusalem* (Isa. 52:2). He will erect the Sanctuary, restore the Holy of Holies, build the city of Jerusalem, and raise Israel from the dust. Thus the Writ says first: *The Lord doth build up Jerusalem;* and then, *He gathereth together the dispersed of Israel;* and finally, *Who healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds* (Ps. 147:2-3).

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ON THE HORIZON

SCRAMBLED EGGHEADS ON THE RIGHT

Mr. Buckley's New Weekly

DWIGHT MACDONALD

LAST fall a self-confident young man named William F. Buckley, Jr., announced that he had raised $290,000 from 125 "investors" to publish "a new conservative weekly of opinion." He said he had put in only $10,000 himself, but had majority control. On November 19, 1955, the first issue of *National Review* appeared without causing undue public agitation. Nor have the ten following issues I have seen set any rivers aflame.

However, *NR* seems worth examining as a cultural phenomenon: the McCarthy nationalists—they call themselves conservatives, but that is surely a misnomer—have never before made so heroic an effort to be intellectually articulate. Here are the ideas, here is the style of the *lumpen*-bourgeoisie, the half-educated, half-successful provincials (and a provincial may live within a mile of the Empire State Building as well as in Kokomo or Sauk Center) who responded to Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and Senator McCarthy. Anxious, embittered, resentful, they feel that the main stream of American politics since 1932 has passed them by, as indeed it has, and they have the slightly paranoiac suspiciousness of an isolated minority group. For these are men from underground, the intellectually underprivileged who feel themselves excluded from a world they believe is ruled by liberals (or eggheads —the terms are, significantly, interchangeable in *NR*) just as the economic underdog feels alienated from society.

It is interesting to note that, of the score of "names" who sent in greetings to the first issue, the only ones that can be called intellectuals, by the most generous standards, are Ludwig von Mises and Raymond Moley. The others are a weird mixture: Admiral Ben Moreel and Adolphe Menjou; Gene Tunney and J. Howard Pew, the Pennsylvania oil magnate; Mrs. Preston Davie, of "Only x Days to Save the Republic" fame, and Father James M. Gillis, C.S.P.; René A. Wormser, counsel to the Reece Committee in its crackpot "investigation" of foundations, and Vivien Kellems, the Joan of Arc of our own Poujadist tax-resistance movement; the aged Edward F. Hutton of Wall Street and the venerable Cecil B. DeMille of Hollywood.

THE young publisher who is launching his review with these variegated blessings comes of a large, rich, and ardently Catholic family whose seignory is an estate in the grand style near Lakeville, Connecticut, which among the more eggheaded local gentry enjoys somewhat the aura of Count Dracula's castle. (Buckley himself has a lit-

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THE *National Review*, the newest American weekly of countrywide circulation, represents another attempt of the "doctrinaire" right to find a local habitation and a name. DWIGHT MACDONALD, who has had his own wide experience of political journalism both as writer and editor, here takes a close look at *NR*'s first ten issues. Born in New York City and educated at Yale, Mr. Macdonald founded and edited *Politics*, and he has also been an editor of *Fortune* and *Partisan Review*. He is the author of *Henry Wallace: The Man and the Myth* (Vanguard, 1948) and *The Ford Foundation*, which is scheduled for publication by Reynal early this spring. Currently Mr. Macdonald is a staff writer for the *New Yorker*.

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tle place of half a dozen acres and fifteen or twenty rooms on the Sound near Stamford.) He has nine brothers and two sisters, give or take a couple, all reputed to be of his political views, as are his parents. Buckley, Senior, is a wealthy entrepreneur with "large interests" in oil and other lucrative things (I suspect *he* put a lot more than $10,000 into *NR*). Since he graduated from Yale in 1950, Buckley has done a great deal of speaking and debating, with and without the aid of TV and radio, and has published two books, each of them briefly on the *Times* best-seller list: *God and Man at Yale* (1951), a jaunty indictment of his alma mater as a hotbed of irreligion and socialism; and, with his brother-in-law, L. Brent Bozell, *McCarthy and his Enemies* (1954), a laborious piece of special pleading which—to quote myself—gives the effect of a brief by Cadwallader, Wickersham & Taft on behalf of a pickpocket caught in the men's room of the subway. Buckley is a debater—his mind is quick, clear, plausible, and shallow—and he would rather argue than eat, a trait I find endearing. Had he been born a generation earlier, he would have been making the cafeterias of 14th Street ring with Marxian dialectics. He is a lively and engaging fellow, and would be an excellent journalist if he had a little more humor, common sense, and intellectual curiosity; also if he knew how to write. The tongue is his instrument of expression, not the typewriter.

This is unfortunate since Buckley is *NR*'s editor-in-chief as well as its publisher. There are five other editors: James Burnham, a spectacular backslider from Trotskyism who signalized his departure from the movement in 1940 by publishing *The Managerial Revolution* and whose intellectual horizon has steadily narrowed to a kind of anti-Communism as sterile and doctrinaire as the ideology he fights; Willmoore Kendall, a wild Yale don of extreme, eccentric, and very abstract views who can get a discussion into the shouting stage faster than anybody I have ever known; Jonathan Mitchell, who I think used to write a dullish column for one of the liberal weeklies long ago, and writes another one now for *NR*; Suzanne LaFollette, whose boiling point is even lower than Kendall's, and who was an associate of Albert Jay Nock on the *Freeman* of the 20's, was later active on the Trotsky Defense Committee, and was recently associated with John Chamberlain in editing another *Freeman* (a pseudo-conservative job, like *NR*—Nock's old *Freeman* was the real thing, and an excellent magazine it was); and, finally, William S. Schlamm, who around 1939 did a column in the *New Leader* which denounced the German people as Nazis and Jew-killers in Peglerian accents, and who later became an idea-man for Henry Luce, his chief idea being an abortive attempt to launch a high-brow literary magazine, which came to nothing, after copious expenditure of funds, perhaps because the terms in which he conceived the magazine, as outlined in a notorious memo to Mr. Luce, were vulgar, philistine, chauvinist—in a word, lowbrow. In general, young Mr. Buckley has perhaps not been fortunate in his choice of editors.

The first issue also announced sixteen "Associates and Contributors," of whom I recognize the names of only seven, although I have been around journalistic circles a good many years. Obscurity is no crime—we all have to start somewhere—but, judging from the product, I should guess the obscurity here is deserved. The seven identifiables are Mr. Bozell, John Chamberlain, Max Eastman, Russell Kirk, Eugene Lyons, Morris Ryskind, and Freda Utley. Chamberlain's name was dropped after the first issue and Kirk's after the fourth, perhaps because they preferred to take responsibility only for their own contributions (which have continued). This seems understandable, for Chamberlain is a professional journalist who must take a dim view of much of the magazine, while Kirk's column, "From the Academy," is the only consistently humane and civilized voice in each issue. As a real conservative, with some cultural baggage, he must often wonder what the devil he is doing in this particular galley.

WE HAVE long needed a good conservative magazine. (We have also long needed a good liberal magazine.) This is not it, any more than its predecessor, the LaFollette-Chamberlain *Freeman*—which deployed much the same forces—was. And for the same reasons: because it is neither good nor conservative.

Like Senator McCarthy, whom it admires, the *NR* is "anti-liberal" (though, like

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him, it never bothers to define very clearly what it means by "liberal") but not conservative. Culturally, a conservative is someone like Irving Babbitt or Paul Elmer More, not always the liveliest company in the world but a respecter and defender of tradition. The *NR*'s editorials—as I shall presently show—are as elegant as a poke in the nose, as cultivated as a camp meeting, as witty as a prat-fall. ("After You, Gaston!" for instance, is definitely not a witty head for an editorial in 1956, whatever it may have been in 1916.) Politically, a conservative is someone like that admirable Republican, the late John Marshall Harlan, the "great dissenter" on the post-Civil War Supreme Court, whose respect for the Constitution was such that he insisted on interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment according to the clear intent of the Congress that passed it, as protecting persons (the newly freed slaves) rather than corporations from molestation by state laws; and such that, in his famous Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) dissent, he gave the classic formulation to the doctrine that racial segregation in itself is discriminatory (because, although he himself was a pro-slavery man until after the Civil War and was never any special "friend of the Negro," in his old-fasioned simplicity he thought that Plessy, a Negro, had indeed been deprived of his rights under the Fourteenth Amendment when he was arrested for refusing to move from a "white" to a "colored" railway coach). In short, a true conservative, like a true liberal, sticks to his principles even when the result goes against his prejudices.

Not of such stuff are Buckley and his colleagues made. Indeed, they object to the Supreme Court's recent recognition, after half a century of shameful equivocation, of Harlan's Plessy doctrine. They don't meet the central issue, they don't quite dare to state that segregation is not in itself discrimination, because they generally don't meet awkward issues head-on (or perhaps just don't recognize them—one must allow for a general obtuseness), but they sneak in the back way with a pious declaration that segregation "is a problem that should be solved not by the central government, but locally—in the states—and in the hearts of men."

A true conservative appeals to the laws or, if desperate, to tradition, but certainly not to the "hearts of men." This is demagogy, or rather, since the *NR* is not very persuasive, attempted demagogy.

Again, an article in the *NR* objects to the Supreme Court's reversing Judge Medina's sentencing of Harry Sacher for contempt of court after the 1949 trial of the top Communist leaders, and also to the criticisms of Medina's judicial conduct which some of the justices made. The writer gives no reasons for objecting to the reversal and does not try to show that Medina's conduct was correct. He merely quotes from the Supreme Court's decision as if it were *ipso facto* scandalous—as, of course, it is to the hopped-up readers of *NR*—and then concludes: "The lesson which Communist lawyers will draw from the Supreme Court's decision—is: go and do likewise." Very likely, but hardly a conservative approach; bending the law to serve a Worthy Cause is more in the style of those terrible pragmatic Deweyan liberals. So, too, with the invasion of private rights by the state. Conservatives are concerned about this, and so is *NR*—except that *NR*'s concern is selective: it is sensitive about property rights but less so about civil liberties, unless someone it takes to be on its own side is involved, as in the firing of Professor Fuchs from George Washington University after he had been a cooperative witness (about his Communist past) before a Congressional committee. Mr. Bozell wrote a fine muckraking exposé about *that* scandal, but when liberal oxen are similarly gored, *NR* files the case under Saving the Republic. That the liberals have often behaved in the same way is interesting and, if one tends as I do to sympathize more with them than with the *NR* attitude, distressing, but really beside the point. To be simply anti-liberal is not to be a conservative—nor, of course, vice versa. It is to be, simply, anti-liberal—i.e., the opposite number of the liberals, and opposite numbers have a way of adding up to the same sum in the end. The true conservative, like the true liberal, is not simply anti-something; he is for a set of principles, and this is a much more painful business than just sticking with the gang.

JOURNALISTICALLY, the *National Review* actually manages to be duller than the liberal weeklies. It is even more predictable, much more long-winded, and a good deal

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less competent. Considering that its editors are by no means journalistic neophytes, it is a remarkably amateurish job. (I use the term in the bad sense: trying to do the same thing as the pros, but with inferior technique, as in amateur theatricals. There is also a good sense: trying to do something different from the pros, using a technique that is "unprofessional" only in that it is original, as in D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature.*) Their idea of a hot series is four articles on "Presidential Inability" in which the Constitutional problems posed by Eisenhower's recent illness are explored with a grim thoroughness that includes the facsimile reproduction of two Congressional bills and one resolution. The cartoons are sometimes vapid (a seance of diplomats, with Stalin's specter hovering overhead; caption: "Spirit of Geneva, Are You There?"), sometimes primitive (Truman as a parrot on a perch saying "KWAK YAK YAK KWAK KWAK"), sometimes rather touchingly antique (a mousy, bespectacled figure leaps in the air as his backside is peppered with birdshot, his briefcase labeled, so help me, "John Q."), but always bad-amateurish. And the *longueurs!* I'm no devotee of the brief article, as reader or as writer, and one of the reasons for the dullness of the liberal weeklies has long seemed to me their habit of cutting every article down to a couple of thousand words; four 1,500 word articles can read much more monotonously than one definitive job of 6,000. But an article can be long because the writer has a lot to say, or because he doesn't know how to say it. Almost everything seems long in the *NR,* even the short pieces.

Especially painful are the "light" efforts, like Mr. Schlamm's doggedly jocose "Arts and Manners" column ("My idea of a perfect evening has always been to listen to an old performance of *Don Giovanni,* my eyes closed so that they can see the perfection of the dear girl next to me"), or Morrie Ryskind's interminable "They'll Never Get Me on That Couch," a heavy-breathing onslaught on psychoanalysis which concludes: "Me—I've had enough. I've already served the trauma with eviction papers and I am sending him to military school. I'm making another three-year retreat to the w-mb. So long, folks; see you in 1958." The reader is served a number of these soufflés that collapse into soggy facetiousness. So many, in fact, that it seems likely the editors have made a deliberate effort to liven up the magazine, praiseworthy as against the pale earnestness of the liberal magazines—but, alas, it takes more than intention to be amusing.

ANOTHER trait of amateur (bad-style) journalism is to use much space in the violent expression of one's opinions and very little in backing them up, or even defining them. Buckley rhetoricizes for two pages in support of the Eastland Committee's recent investigation of Communist sympathies among employees of the New York *Times*—opening, with customary elegance: "The other day the N.Y. *Times* demonstrated its mastery of the art of kicking a midget in the groin and then staging a parade in honor of itself"—but the only specific charge he makes is that the *Times* has "defended Owen Lattimore," and he gives no evidence to support it. The real question, of course, as in the case of the Hollywood Ten, is whether Communists have had any influence on the contents of the paper, but Buckley shows no interest in this, any more than Senator Eastland did, perhaps because the results would be disappointing. So, too, Willmoore Kendall, who produces a weekly column of abstruse indignation called "The Liberal Line," finds enough space to devote an entire column to reprinting quotations from an editorial in the *Progressive* giving Christmas greetings to various persons for services rendered to the liberal cause. But Professor Kendall—who in his unworldly enthusiasm for abstractions is the very type of "egghead" the rest of the magazine denounces—has never felt he had enough space to explain just what he means by "the liberal line." The closest he has come is in a five-point credo (Kendall is great on points, generally somewhat blunted) which merrily chases its tail:

"1. That there *is* a Liberal point of view on national and world affairs, for which the word 'Liberal' has been appropriated. [Fair enough.]

"2. That the point of view consists, on the one hand, of a distinctively Liberal way of looking at and grasping political reality, and on the other hand of a distinctively Liberal set of values and goals. [We're right back at Grand Central again.]

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"3. That the nation's leading opinion-makers for the most part share the Liberal point of view. . . .

"4. That we may properly speak of them as a huge *propaganda machine,* engaged in a major, sustained assault upon the sanity, and upon the prudence and the morality of the American people. . . .

"5. That *National Review* must keep a watchful eye on . . . the Liberal propaganda machine . . . in a word, on the *Liberal Line.*"

In short, there *is* a Liberal viewpoint that is called Liberal and that expresses Liberal "values and goals." It is a huge *propaganda machine* and must be kept an eye on. If italics were horses, intellectual beggars might ride.

The most curious article yet printed by *NR* is a seven-page feature called "The Strange Case of Dr. Dooley," which is about a Connecticut psychiatrist who recently pleaded guilty to having had sexual relations with various young boys he had been treating. This might be expected in the *Daily News* or in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology,* but why in a political weekly? Aside from the fact it all happened near Lakeville, Conn., the Buckley tribe's native habitat (but that explanation seems too amateurish—even for the *NR*), the only discernible reasons are that Dr. Dooley claimed his pederasty was therapeutic and that his lawyer and certain other people supported this exculpation on the grounds that his methods had "worked," i.e., had improved the psychological health of his young patients. This gives the anonymous author—why no signature, by the way?—a chance for several yards of moralizing about progressive education, sexual morality, pragmatic liberalism, etc. But even granting that Dr. Dooley's supporters were liberals—which, in fact, is likely—it seems a peculiarly indirect method of polemic. Perverse, in fact.

But then everything has a way of being converted to grist for the *NR*'s political line—another bad-amateur trait, and one shared by the *Daily Worker.* A review of a book about the sinking of the *Titanic* turns into a parable about modern society, with the captains "in the chancelleries of London, Paris and Washington . . . smitten by the deadly sickness of mind and will that is called Liberalism," able only to "chatter incoherently on the bridges of their sinking ships." Reviewing a current play, Mr. Schlamm, who weirdly combines a rather sleazy *bon-vivant* attitude with strait-laced vigilance against liberal sex, writes: "*Janus* is of course about adultery. Nobody would dare to produce a Broadway play that is not." The music critic tells Beethoven that he "may have thought he was expressing the misty complexities of the Rights of Man," but he was "in fact . . . transliterating for his age the spirit of Sophoclean tragedy," one of his roles being "Oedipus alone, his eyes' gore drenching his beard." One of Buckley's brothers writes a feature article warning sportsmen not to ask for Federal subsidies for game reservations because That Way Lies Statism. And so it goes. Never a bright moment.

THE "Publisher's Statement" with which the first issue opens may fairly be taken as a sample of the *NR* prose style, since presumably it was written with special care. Four main qualities emerge, to wit:

Opacity: "*National Review* is out of place . . . because, in its maturity, literate America rejected conservatism in favor of radical social experimentation. Instead of covetously consolidating its premises, the United States seems tormented by its tradition of fixed postulates having to do with the meaning of existence, with the relationship of the state to the individual, of the individual to his neighbor, so clearly enunciated in the enabling documents of our Republic."

Brutality: "Drop a little itching powder in Jimmy Wechsler's bath and before he has scratched himself for the third time, Arthur Schlesinger [Schlesinger *junior* is clearly meant, not his father—but let's not quibble] will have denounced you in a dozen books and speeches."

Banality: "Let's face it," "when all is said and done," "after all, we crashed through," "a vigorous and incorruptible journal of conservative opinion" [they mean them], "we have nothing to offer but the best that is in us." (Compare a later editorial: "Our statesmen must be gluttons for punishment. One wink from a Soviet diplomat and they are ready to rush halfway across the world to get kicked in the teeth." [Twenty-nine words, two clichés, one kick in the teeth.])

Vulgarity: "And that, ladies and gentlemen, leaves us just about the hottest thing in town." On this note, the editor-in-chief con-

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cludes his *Apologia,* his *Areopagitica,* his call for a return to tradition. To borrow another snappy *NR* locution: "Well, brother, what do *you* think?"

THIS is indeed the voice of the *lumpen*-bourgeoisie. *NR*'s "Letters" department is revealing. There are almost no critical letters, not because the editors have suppressed them—or, at least, so I would guess—but because the magazine's level is not serious enough to stimulate them. Nor are there letters of correction or amplification; readers satisfied by so modestly endowed a journal are unlikely to have much to add. The whole atmosphere is that of the religious revival ("Amen, brother!") rather than of dialogue or communication. These are, essentially, love letters—brief, stammering protestations of affection. The writers are inarticulate, culturally underprivileged folk. The diction is either stiff, like a farmhand's Sunday suit—"Please permit me to wish the promoters every success in this worthwhile project"—or vulgar—"thanks for a home base." In both cases it is the language of people not accustomed to expressing themselves on paper. "I am crazy about it," a housewife writes from San Francisco. "Your wonderful weekly really fills a gap." A Lt. Col. pronounces it "a fine periodical," while a lady writes from Miami, "Your new magazine is magnificent. Every single word of the first three editions has been devoured by me." Another lady of Dallas confesses ". . . so satisfying. I myself find nothing to criticize." And a clergyman weighs in all the way from Huntsville, Utah: "Even for a first issue, it's a superlative job—honest, jam-packed factually, witty . . . something we have been waiting and praying for in America."

There is frequently a sort of pathos in this enthusiasm, like the joy of a long-beleaguered garrison when the U.S. Marines finally arrive: ". . . an oasis in the desert. The spring has been very dry since 1932. This is a second Valley Forge." "At last the faceless, voiceless, unorganized but patriotic genuine Americans . . . have a medium." "God knows it is high time." ". . . the long-needed house organ of the outnumbered but still dynamic American Underground that refuses to bend with the prevailing winds of Regimentation, Monopoly, Conformity, and Ideological Sleepwalking."

This mood of helpless isolation is also present in the magazine itself. There are so many enemies; the liberal conspiracy is omnipresent; it includes not only Mrs. Roosevelt, Dean Acheson, and Paul Hoffman, but also *Life,* the New York *Times,* nay even Eisenhower himself, whose behavior is as constantly disappointing to the editors as that of F.D.R. was to the editors of the liberal weeklies in the 30's. Defectors are constantly cropping up, as David Lawrence (because of his "strange proposal" that both parties nominate Eisenhower in 1956), or the late Bernard DeVoto, whose obituary posed the usual problem for John Chamberlain: how could the man who had so valiantly battled for the philistines against Van Wyck Brook's egghead attack on Mark Twain in the 20's ("The stuff about Mark Twain being a displaced Russian novelist was strictly for the birds"), how could he have later fallen for all that liberal propaganda? (Bad company, concludes Mr. Chamberlain; Benny shouldn't have hung around the *Harper's* poolroom.)

In the dull lexicon of *NR* there is no such word as success. McCarthy was their one triumph, and where are the headlines of yesteryear? One of Buckley's sisters circulated a denunciation, among her fellow Smith alumnae, of certain professors as being tainted with Communism; the result was, as she reveals in an article in the first issue bitterly entitled "How to Raise Money in the Ivy League," that "in less than three months, the world's largest women's college received more money [from its alumnae] than had ever been collected in any full year in its history." Buckley himself was equally effective at Yale; the Alumni Fund received record contributions in the year after his *God and Man at Yale* appeared.

The most depressing article I found in *NR*—and that's saying a lot—was a lugubrious think-piece titled "The Atomic Disarmament Trap," which the editors summarized: "Our foreign policy, says an expert on atomic politics, is based on the premise that the USSR will continue to reject international control of atomic energy. But Moscow may disarm us by accepting—and keeping faith." The danger is clear, appalling, and up to now not noticed by anybody but *NR*: since we have more atom-hydrogen bombs than they do, we would be giving up a military

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advantage in exchange merely for avoiding the possible destruction of the world, including U.S., or us. It's no picnic, being an editor of *NR*—or even a reader.

PERHAPS the most significant editorial *NR* has printed is "A Bow to the Left" in the January 18 issue, in which the editors confess a certain admiration for Paul Hoffman, Elmo Roper, and the other directors of the Fund for the Republic. "The point is that none of the directors has very much to gain, and all of them have considerable to lose, in the eyes of a public soberer than they, by their bizarre activities. But on they go. They are quite obviously prepared to lose not only a measure of personal esteem, but *also*, if necessary, tax exemption! . . . We think, by contrast, of the scores upon scores of timorous right-wingers we happen to know who will overwhelm you with dire talk about the engulfing age of socialism . . . and yet when the occasion presents itself to make a sacrifice in behalf of their convictions, the conversation quickly turns to the weather. . . . That is what sets them off from the directors of the Fund for the Republic. And that is why the Left marches on, while the Right retreats." The editors don't try to explain this difference in left and right behavior. I suggest it is because the left—to use *NR*'s quaint terminology—has a set of ideas and ideals in which they can believe, which seem to them intellectually consistent and morally attractive, while the right does not. (For myself, I no longer find the left ideology either morally or intellectually satisfying, but that is another question; the point is that it is a far more plausible doctrine than the right's crude patchwork of special interests.) One of *NR*'s few literate letters-to-the-editor, from Frank S. Meyer of Woodstock, N.Y., comments on "the insistence [of other readers] that the magazine publish nothing that makes serious intellectual demands upon the reader," and continues: "But we are an opposition, and we have to fight conformity. . . . It is ideas they [the dominant liberal "social engineers"] fear, for in the end it is ideas which are decisive. It was ideas developed in the *Nation* and the *New Republic* and the *Masses* thirty and forty years ago that seduced a generation and laid the foundations for the New Deal and what has followed. The circulations of these magazines were not large, but they spoke to the younger generation, in and out of the universities, and won them—with devastating effect." Ideas, however, or even sufficient journalistic skill to conceal their lack, are just what *NR* lacks. A more typical reader is a gentleman of Memphis, who writes: "I think you are going places. I have only one comment of criticism. Your writers are really too brilliant for the lay mind, if you know what I mean." I know what he means, and it isn't encouraging for the future of the *National Review*.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE NEW OLD TESTAMENT

Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Setting

JAMES BROWN

IN RECENT years the study of the Old Testament has for many of us suddenly become alive and relevant to an unexpected degree. This access of vitality to what had been a more or less rigid discipline is the result in large measure of archaeological findings that for the first time enable us to see the religion of Israel against the background of its ancient Near Eastern environment.

With the help of this material we can test and appraise reconstructions of Biblical history and theology which otherwise tend to be at the mercy of presuppositions handed down by the Biblical criticism of past years. To take one example: the patriarchal narratives have frequently been held to reflect less the society and ideas of the age with which they claim to deal than those of a later one—if, indeed, they are not, as some have thought, pure invention. Yet the contemporary evidence from Nuzu in Assyria has shown that these stories faithfully preserve customs typical of the 2nd millennium and not of the 1st. When Sarah, for instance, being childless herself, gave her handmaid to her husband to bear him children, we now know that she was merely following a custom of the time. There is thus a greater disposition today to accept the substantial historicity of the patriarchal narratives and to take at face value what they have to tell us of Hebrew culture in that period. Again, in the last twenty years we have been in the possession of a considerable body of texts from Ras Shamra which allow us to reconstruct with a hitherto unhoped for exactness the culture and religion of Canaan, and which illuminate the Old Testament at many points.

The extensive use of this comparative material for the understanding of the Old Testament is a characteristic feature of the most vital of the modern groupings of Biblical scholars—the Scandinavian school. In any scholarly discussion of the Old Testament for a long time to come, we shall hear the names of Pedersen, Engnell, Haldar, Bentzen, Widengren, Kapelrud, Oestborn, and Lindhagen. One of the most influential works of this school—Engnell's *Gamla Testamentet*—is still available only in Swedish, but his *Studies in Divine Kingship* first appeared in English, as have most of the major works of the other writers.

THE older approach from which the Swedish critics dissent so radically is associated with the great name of Julius Wellhausen. The Wellhausen method subjected the Biblical documents to intensive literary analysis for the purpose of reconstructing the course of development of Israelite thought. It was a magnificent synthesis of the imaginative and the scholarly, although one of its most surprising features has always been the virtual disregard

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How original were the religious ideas and practices of the ancient Hebrews? A new approach to the Hebrew Bible, based on archaeological findings and analysis of other ancient Semitic literatures, has for the first time placed the faith of ancient Israel clearly in its Near Eastern context, raising once again—as JAMES BROWN points out—the question of its unique contribution. Mr. Brown, here introduced to American readers for the first time, was born in South Shields, England, in 1919 and educated at Queen's College, Oxford. During 1952-55 he was Interfaith Fellow at Hebrew Union College, where he specialized in Semitic languages and literature.

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of such archaeological evidence as might be available for checking the reconstruction. It is safe to say, however, that the Wellhausen reconstruction of the development of the religion of Israel has now been decisively demolished. Wellhausen's analysis of the Pentateuch into four basic documentary sources (a number that some later scholars have increased) has always been the citadel of the theory, and it is just this that the Scandinavians are inclined to reject, heavily stressing instead the role and characteristics of oral tradition in the ancient world.

Yet the older approach was not lightly put forward by idle scholars on a wet Sunday afternoon for want of anything better to do. It represents a serious attempt to grapple with the *Unformlichkeit,* the formlessness, of the Pentateuch, and to do justice to its repetitions, overlappings, and contradictions. If most of us now have qualifications to make about the Wellhausen analysis with all its textual dissections and emendations, no better hypothesis —and a hypothesis it confessedly is—has yet arisen to take its place.

Wellhausen's theory of the growth of Israelite religion saw it as a development from the animistic worship of the patriarchs, via the localized tribal deity of pre-prophetic Israel, to the universal monotheism of the later chapters of Isaiah. Now the most obvious objection to raise against this view is that it is not how the Old Testament itself interprets its own history. For the Old Testament sees Israelite history not as proceeding along any kind of line of development, but as a series of crises in which the Word of God descends upon the temporal world in the twofold aspect of *judgment* (involving the rejection of a faithless people) and *blessing* (bringing about the recreation of a true and purified nation). This is a dynamic interpretation of history with which we, against the background of our own times, are instinctively more in sympathy than with the "evolutionary meliorism" of an earlier generation.

It is now generally recognized that the Wellhausen approach owed much to the Hegelian evolutionary philosophy of history, and as a matter of fact Wellhausen himself acknowledged the extent of his debt to Vatke, a pronounced Hegelian in whose *Die Religion des Alten Testamentes* (1835) the seed of the later scholar's reconstruction was already present. As a result of this Hegelian influence, subsequent Biblical criticism tended to divide the Old Testament against itself over the nature of true religion, with Judaism regarded, in the familiar terms of the Hegelian dialectic, as a synthesis of the pre-prophetic faith (thesis) and the prophetic reaction (antithesis).

Modern criticism exhibits an opposite tendency; it understands (to adapt a phrase Professor H. H. Rowley used in a related context) that "sharp lines of division are not to be drawn, while recognizing that differences exist." It was characteristic of the old critical orthodoxy to maintain that prophecy stood in sharp contrast to the Law; that the prophets, seeking a more "spiritual" religion, would have none of the sacrificial cult. The prophetic writings do, of course, contain severe strictures on the religion of their day. But many of the Psalms are now thought to have originated in the sacrificial cult, yet these contain features which in style and content recall the oracles of the canonical prophets. Scholars who have followed up this clue therefore postulate the existence of groups of cultic prophets in Israel with the same close relation to the sanctuary which we now know obtained in the case of ecstatic groups in other lands.

This would explain the frequent Biblical yoking of priest and prophet in a single phrase, as well as the presence of cultic and ritual ideas in the canonical prophets. The new tendency is thus to interpret the apparently anticultic Biblical oracles as revealing only hostility to the wrong or foreign cult (Amos); to the cult regarded as an end in itself (Isaiah, Jeremiah); and to the cult offered in the wrong spirit (Hosea, Micah). In this account, the prophets are no longer cut off so sharply from their roots in the life of the people, and it once again becomes possible to see the unity of the Old Testament.

But in any case it seems doubtful that the metaphors of growth and development employed by the Wellhausen school can be satisfactorily applied to the ideas of the Old Testament; they derive from biology and are not necessarily valid in the religious sphere, where "advanced" and "primitive" conceptions of God can exist side by side in the mind of any one man. The biological analogy fostered the assumption that the early sections of the Bible must be the most primitive in their religious notions, almost verging on pure superstition; any "advanced" ideas found there would then repre-

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sent the work of later editors. Consequently the world of the patriarchs, as revealed in the early parts of the Bible, was interpreted in terms of animism and polytheism, with room being made for a few side influences from totemism and ancestor worship.

Yet we know from the comparative study of literature that long before the patriarchs appeared on the scene, the Orient had left animism well behind. In support of this judgment, Professor G. Ernest Wright of Chicago, in *The Old Testament Against its Environment,* points to the existence of temples in the Near East from the beginning of the 4th millennium. The general trend of religious development may well have been along the lines the older view suggested, but to compress it into the few centuries making up the Biblical period is an impossible procedure. The evidence which we now have from the environment of early Israel not only reveals a more or less sophisticated civilization, but also well-developed concepts of a personal God. The work of such scholars as Andrew Lang, Father Wilhelm Schmidt, and Geo Widengren has led to the conclusion that belief in "High Gods" whose powers were considered universal in extent is quite ancient. Engnell has contended that the God of Moses was fully such a one: "The god of creation and of destiny, the god of lightning and of rain, the giver of fertility and the judge, ethically differentiated" (i.e. not transcending the contrast between good and evil).

Such a Being is a long way from the local, anthropomorphic nature deity of earlier writers. Arguments for a primitive monotheism that spring from our new knowledge of the nature of ancient religion, and not from any theological *parti pris,* have therefore to be given more serious consideration than was once fashionable—though the monotheism in question is not to be defined in a Greek speculative sense. This position has most recently been maintained by a young Scandinavian scholar, Helmer Ringgren, in his *Word and Wisdom* (1947).

Ringgren draws attention to two processes in the thought world of the ancient Near East. The first he calls *Gottespaltung* ("splitting of God"), in which what were originally qualities of a High God, such as his righteousness and truth, are split off, personified, and worshipped as divine. On the other hand, there is a simultaneous process of *Göttervereinigung* ("uniting of Gods"), whereby different gods could be recognized as manifestations of a supreme God who has absorbed their characters and functions. Of such a nature is a Babylonian text of the late 2nd millennium praising the war-god Ninurta, and listing the more important gods as parts of his body. Enlil and Ninlil are his two eyes, his lips are Anu and Antum, his skull Adad, his breast is Nabu, his neck is Marduk, and so on. In this way, too, other gods could be deprived of independent theological existence.

THE central event in the religious life of the ancient Near East was a New Year festival which could be celebrated in either spring or autumn, as both of these were critical times when the threat of famine became real. In such a crisis, human society could not be thought of as standing to one side and out of things. And in fact, the ancient Near Eastern mind made no rigid distinction between the world of men and that of the gods: human history was merely one aspect of cosmic ideas and activities. The whole universe was ruled by the same general cosmic principle of a "right" and secure order which had been established through the ceremonies of this New Year festival. In an important and influential book, *Myth and Ritual,* edited by Dr. S. H. Hooke in 1933, a group of English scholars enumerated five elements in the annual festival, whose central figure was the king regarded as divine:

1. The dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of the god.
2. The recitation or symbolic representation of the myth of creation.
3. The ritual combat, depicting the triumph of the god over his enemies.
4. The sacred marriage.
5. The triumphal procession, in which the king played the part of the god and was followed by a train of lesser gods or visiting deities.

In sum, the festival was a kind of dramatic representation of the primeval struggle between the gods which issued in the Creation. As the representation effected what it signified, it was drama with a purpose.

Now one of the most keenly disputed subjects among Old Testament scholars today is whether this type of festival was ever observed in Israel, although the texts discovered some years ago at Ugarit (a port city in Northern Syria) show that it was known in Canaan. It is doubtful whether there is any direct reference to it in the Old Testament itself, but we may have to take into consideration here the possibility of

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a censorship of our sources by a later age to which such rituals were abhorrent. In fact, at several places in our sources we meet echoes of the festival pattern; the references, for instance, to the fight between God and a monster variously designated as Rahab, Leviathan, the Sea, a Serpent seem to relate to the old myth of the fight between the divine hero, Marduk, and Tiamat, the watery chaos of Babylonian legend. This myth was the *spoken* element which accompanied the *acted* ritual combat.

Again, a characteristic observance of the Feast of Tabernacles to this day are the *succoth,* or booths of greenery. The suggestion has been offered that this is connected with the idea of the sacred marriage where the bridal chamber of the god-king was similarly decorated. These two features, to mention no others, meet us in the Old Testament as disintegrated elements of what was originally a single complex.

But the strongest evidence for the existence in Israel of the New Year festival is to be found in the Psalms, where we come upon indications of such essential features of the ceremony as the triumphal procession. The modern tendency—again in contrast to the older one—is to see the Psalms as early compositions almost all of which come from the pre-Exilic community—if, indeed, some of them are not simply Israelite adaptations of even older Canaanite lyrics. So, far from their being free excursions by poetic spirits moved to composition by some signal event in nature or history, the Psalms are now given a very concrete "setting in life" in the Israelite cult, where they formed the liturgical recitations which accompanied various acts, explaining their purpose.

It is possible, then, to read verses 7ff. of Psalm 24 quite simply as a liturgical antiphon. The procession halts at the Temple gates and the worshippers cry:

Lift up your heads, O Gates;
And be lifted up, O Ancient Doors,
That the King of Glory may enter.

The ministers then inquire:

Who is this King of Glory?

And the people reply:

Yahweh, a Mighty One, a Hero,
Yahweh, a battle Hero!

Psalms such as 93, 96, 97, and 99, in which the phrase "Yahweh has become King" occurs, may also be interpreted as revealing the motif of the Enthronement of Yahweh, which figures in the New Year festival. Of particular interest are Psalms 2 and 110, for in them we find not only "enthronement oracles" originally uttered by some prophetic ministrant of the cult, but also the old idea of the ritual combat: the "enemies"—who are at the same time the primeval powers of Chaos and the political enemies that the kingdom might have to face in the ensuing year—are gathered together so that their defeat can be symbolically represented and effected. Many other Psalms (e.g., 29, 47, 48, 40, 68, and 89) point back in the same general direction to a ritual origin and function, and to conceptions of the king as the "son" of God, his humiliated and then exalted servant.

The advantage of postulating the existence in Israel of some such festival as this is that it makes better sense of the Psalms than the older approach. It also throws light on the occurrence of cultic motifs—for example, "the Day" of Judgment of Yahweh in the prophetic books. The cultic "day" was one of judgment upon hostile ritual-political powers. What the prophets do is to historicize this motif. They take it right out of the mythical world of the cult and apply it to present or near-future history, in which not the enemies of God and Israel, but Israel herself stands under the judgment of God. Of this judgment the great empires—whose magnificence and intimidating force we can still feel two and a half millennia later as we contemplate their echoing monuments—are the divinely chosen instrument.

It is also interesting to notice that many of these cultic and mythic motifs entered into Jewish apocalyptic literature. The principle here is that *Urzeit* equals *Endzeit* ("In our beginnings is our end"): those features which we find attending a religious conception of the creation of the universe we shall also find attending the conception of its dissolution. In conformity with this principle, the ideas of conflict, of judgment, of a divinely chosen leader, and of a Messianic state all reappear in the Jewish apocalyptic books that date from the 1st century B.C.E. What does this mean? Messianism and apocalyptic modes of thought are not, as had been supposed, late developments in Israelite religion but early ones; when such features are found in early texts like the Book of Isaiah, we are no longer justified in assuming, on that ground alone, that they are

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the work of later writers. It has further been suggested that the New Year festival, with its two-sided theme of humiliation and exaltation, may have been responsible for the similar double-sidedness of the prophetic oracles, with their alternations of the themes of disaster and restoration. Again the lesson is that we must exercise caution before dissecting the text and assigning the prophecies of restoration to a later hand and time.

Yet however attractive the hypothesis of such a festival may be, it remains speculative and beset with difficulties. The most urgent difficulties center around the question of whether Yahweh was ever worshipped as a dying and rising god. The Old Testament knows him so supremely as the Living God that it is difficult to imagine that normative Israelite religion ever thought of him as anything else or connected him with ideas of his own death. Nor was he a mere nature god, for it is of the very essence of Old Testament religion that salvation is to be found not in the repetitive events of nature, but in all the concrete particularity of history. Taking all considerations into account, therefore, it seems more judicious to restrict ourselves to saying only that Yahweh may have been so worshipped at certain times and places when Canaanite influence was strong, but that the rejection of the idea of a dying god by normative Israelite religion did not prevent features of the old Near Eastern pattern from appearing in its cult and literature.

Some further points in the modern treatment of the prophets call for comment. The Wellhausen scheme laid great emphasis upon their role as originators of all that was distinctive in Israel—its monotheism, Messianism, and its ethical note. Yet, as we have seen, the first two, monotheism and Messianism, have a considerable pre-prophetic history; and a study of other Near Eastern literatures reveals that the ethical concern is not entirely distinctive either. Widengren's *Accadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation* illustrates this abundantly, as does the Code of Hammurabi (from the 18th century B.C.E., but containing even older material) in which the king describes himself as divinely commissioned "to cause justice to shine forth in the land, to destroy the wicked and the criminal [so that] the strong should not oppress the weak . . . to further the welfare of the people." At Ugarit, too, we meet the king in his religio-judicial functions, and a similar ethical note is struck: "He judges the cause of the poor, he administers justice to the orphan." We can therefore no longer think of the prophets as unique in their ethical concern; it seems more just to conclude with Gunnar Oestborn (in *Torah in the Old Testament*) that the special characteristic of Israelite religion is, more simply, the energy and consistency with which ethics is emphasized as compared to what has—so far—been found elsewhere.

Another point involves the origin and transmission of the prophetic books. Nahum, Habakkuk, Joel, and Deutero-Isaiah are "liturgy types" and were probably put into writing right off, without any preliminary period of oral currency. Amos and Isaiah are another type, the *diwan*. Their works, as we now have them, were handed down through oral tradition in individual prophetic circles which felt themselves to be speaking in the spirit of their master. In the process, the tradition doubtless underwent a reshaping and an occasional adaptation. In the *diwan* type, therefore, it is doubtful whether we shall ever be able to recover the *ipsissima verba* of the master. Interestingly enough, the same conclusion has been reached by many New Testament scholars, who also stress the role of oral tradition in the handing down of the Gospel material, and that material's reflection, as it now exists, of the life, the interests, and the needs of the early Church. But since Judaism and Christianity are both so intimately connected with history and concerned about historical truth, it seems improbable that scholars will rest content with such skepticism.

The new interpretation of Israelite religion has arisen, as new interpretations usually do, not only from new evidence, but no less directly from a fresh approach to *both* old and new evidence. Yet it raises problems for the theologian, and for any Jew or Christian.

If Israel shared so much in common with her neighbors, what is the distinctive element in her religion which has made it of such unique significance to herself and others: in a word, what is the contribution of Judaism? Even prophecy, once thought to be original with Israel, is now known to have a pre-history. Ecstatic individuals and groups existed previously and in other cultures. More than that, in some texts from Mari on the Middle Euphrates which date from the end of the 18th

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century B.C.E., we come upon a prototype of the Old Testament prophets who appears, as they did, unasked and unbidden with an oracle, and making the same claim that "the god has sent me." Yet we are accustomed to think of the religion of Israel as the uniquely "revealed religion." Against such a background, the question is sharply posed of what value we are to attach to the claim of the Old Testament that Israel stands in a special relationship to God as the people of his choice, the bearer of his designs for the human race?

Two points need to be elaborated here. The first is one which is easily forgotten in a comparative study of any subject—namely, the distinction between origin and significance. Cult, kingship, priesthood, and prophecy—these things did indeed exist before Israel, and even her very language is but one in a family, and a young one at that. It is right, then, that we should use a comparative approach to illuminate the history and thought of the Jewish people. But we must never make the mistake of thinking that Israel and its neighbors meant the same thing by the institutions they had in common. Parallels with other nations can shed light on the origins and development of an institution like prophecy, but they can never *define* its significance for Israel. This can only be done in terms of Israel's own distinctive faith: as customs and habits were taken over, so—and perhaps only after many vicissitudes—they were filled with a new and special content peculiar to Israel. Predominant in this is the belief that the Israelite God was real as no other gods were real, the Lord of History whose mighty acts are revealed in history as he works out his purpose, creating a people out of those who were not a people, delivering them from servitude, entering into a covenant with them —and all this to make them "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

But—and here is the second point—this affirmation, which is written into every page of the Old Testament, has to be made in the teeth of all the contingency and ambiguity of history. Judaism, like Christianity, is intimately involved in what the late Gerhard Kittel once called "the scandal of particularity": the belief that the ultimate meaning of all history is to be found concentrated in a particular series of events which are construed as *Heilsgeschichte,* the history of salvation. Since Revelation uses ordinary historical phenomena as its vehicle, it leaves room for both doubt and faith; we cannot prove that at one place we are dealing with genuine prophecy and at another with false, or with divine revelation here and with the product of natural reason there.

Now it is no accident that along with the new comparative approach there has gone also a renewed interest in Old Testament theology. In many ways the disturbed and distracted period in which we live has affinities with that of the Bible. The great Biblical themes of the transcendence of God, of God as the Lord and Judge of History, and of man as created for the freedom of grace but as knowing also the captivity of sin—these things come alive for us with an intensity of meaning they could never have in the more static political and philosophical climate of a couple of generations ago when the old approach took shape. An English Christian like myself who has enjoyed rather close contacts with Judaism in the United States can only express perplexity that so little is heard of these classical themes in American Jewish life. Perhaps it is because the American has not shared in the European experience, which since 1914, as Dr. Albright has remarked, "has been little more than an uninterrupted series of catastrophes and disillusionments . . . just as it was for the Israelite from 735 to 538 B.C."

In response to this sense of crisis, and as a result of the virtual disappearance among Europeans of the belief in "evolutionary meliorism," a marked revival of Biblical theology has taken place in European Christian circles. Such a revival must surely come in Judaism, too, for to do justice to the complexities of existence today, and to its heights and depths, the full range of the Biblical affirmations about God and man is required.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Fraternity Discrimination

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Rorty in his article "Greek Letter Discrimination" (February 1956) describes an incident which took place at the University of New Hampshire in 1946 involving a Jewish student who pledged and moved into a national fraternity.

Mr. Rorty writes: "Then the college dean advised the fraternity members that because the man was Jewish they should clear his eligibility with the national organization." Inasmuch as I was the dean involved, I should like to set the record straight by saying that my advice to the fraternity members was to take a stand with the national office on keeping the man. The local fraternity made representation to the national office but was told it could not keep the Jewish student.

Ten years have passed and we have made much progress on our campus to eliminate fraternity discriminatory practices. . . . (1) the national fraternity concerned has eliminated discriminatory membership practices and now has Jewish members; (2) twice during the past ten years Jewish students have ably served the Interfraternity Council as president; (3) five years ago the Interfraternity Council made a promise to our Student Senate to actively work toward elimination of fraternity discriminatory practices at national conventions; (4) in 1955 the Interfraternity Council publicly announced a vote of 12 to 2 reaffirming its stand against discrimination; and (5) our one Jewish fraternity (non-discriminating) may have to disband because other national fraternities have been attracting Jewish members in increasing numbers.

I am pleased to report the above because the University of New Hampshire discourages discriminatory practices and has taken every opportunity to effect changes in an educational and orderly way. While the fight for equality of opportunity has not been won, we shall continue to work toward its ultimate achievement.

William A. Medesy

Office of
Associate Dean of Students
University of New Hampshire
Durham, New Hampshire

Religion in America

To the Editor of Commentary:

Nathan Glazer in "The Jewish Revival in America: II" (January) is correct in theory in declaring, "Judaism emphasizes acts, rituals, habits, a way of life. Christianity, in contrast, places more emphasis on beliefs and doctrines." In practice, many Christians are similar to Jews in being impressed by a good and holy man, or by a truly religious community.

The Roman Catholic Church is not as efficient in instilling its basic beliefs into its members' minds and souls as some Protestants fear. Without the example of a few human and inspiring saints to try to follow, or the example of a live, patient and understanding parish priest, Roman Catholics often find theological dogma difficult to accept or appreciate. Many Catholics openly or secretly envy the social life and sense of religious community which often characterize Protestant churches. In its recent excursions into general adult education and its increasing emphasis on lay responsibility, the Church is trying to meet these needs. . . .

American Protestants were impressed by the saintly life of Gandhi. Regardless of denomination, there is tremendous admiration for the inspiring example of Albert Schweitzer. Despite the efforts of hard-working clergymen and religious educators, it is amazing how little many Protestants understand the fundamentals of Christianity or of their particular denomination. But give them a sense of participation in and responsibility for congregational life, plus a devoted minister, and then see how they will respond.

I agree with Mr. Glazer that few Jews are articulate or definite about their religious tenets or experiences. But Christians, on the whole, are not much more advanced. You can count on most Catholics to know their catechism and care deeply for its commitments, but Protestants usually have nothing as tangible as that on which to base their personal articles of faith. There is a climate favorable to organized religion in this country, but most Christians lack the strong convictions that moved their ancestors a couple of generations ago.

Walter R. Storey

Philadelphia, Pa.

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Marjorie Morningstar

To the Editor of Commentary:

In reviewing *Marjorie Morningstar* (February) Norman Podhoretz seems grimly determined to patronize and at the same time annihilate not only a best-selling author, but also a way of life that has managed to survive roughly some four thousand years. . . .

After recovering from the staggering notion that the author of the *Caine Mutiny* should "pass for a serious writer," Mr. Podhoretz moves on to observe that *Marjorie Morningstar* is "perhaps the first novel to treat American Jews intimately as Jews without making them seem exotic." This, unfortunately, is not enough to satisfy Mr. Podhoretz's aesthetic standards. . . . Mr. Wouk is taken to task for his "crucial dishonesty." To prove his point, Mr. Podhoretz ponderously devotes one half of his review to an analysis of Marjorie Morningstar's reasons for eating lobster. Mr. Wouk, it seems, had it all wrong. The real reason Miss Morningstar ate lobster, Mr. Podhoretz points out, is that "dietary laws have little meaning in her life." This reason, Mr. Podhoretz notes, never occurs to Mr. Wouk. It is, I suppose, always rewarding to read a review of a novel by a reviewer blessed with clairvoyance.

It is obvious that I take exception to Mr. Podhoretz's apparent belief that the discussion of lobster is central to the intent of the novel. I should like also to point out that nowhere in the novel does Mr. Wouk imply that a Jew really grows into "a warped creature by eating lobster. . . ."

The reason for Mr. Podhoretz's sensitivity on this score is not known to me. However, at the risk of being considered as clairvoyant as Mr. Podhoretz, I would confidently wager a salami sandwich that Mr. Podhoretz is a good deal fonder of lobster than he is of best-selling novelists.

Aaron Cohodes

Chicago, Illinois

Mr. Podhoretz *writes:*

It is a little bewildering to be accused of an assault on Judaism for having pointed to the universally acknowledged fact that Halachic Judaism has been in a deepening crisis in modern times. (I refer Mr. Cohodes to any number of articles in this magazine written by rabbis and social commentators of every denomination.)

Apparently I failed to make it clear to Mr. Cohodes that my analysis of the lobster-eating incident was meant to *exemplify* the way Wouk handles the question of Jewish observance throughout the novel. I accuse Wouk of dishonesty because he tries to persuade the reader that a girl like Marjorie has no reason to "betray" her religion other than moral cowardice and youthful stupidity. It doesn't take clairvoyance to know that Marjorie's surrender is due as much to the meaninglessness of the dietary laws in her life as to the sophistry of Noel Airman: it merely takes a careful reading of the novel and a cursory look at West End Avenue and Mamaroneck. Wouk *does* imply that there is no hope of health and happiness for the assimilated Jew (perhaps Mr. Cohodes didn't realize that I was using "eating lobster" metaphorically)—how else would Mr. Cohodes interpret the last scene of the novel? (As it happens, I'm not very fond of lobster.)

92nd Street "Y"

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have read, with interest, your article in the January issue by Jacob Korg, "92nd Street Y." It is a comprehensive report on our work and gives your readers an opportunity to learn the extent of our program and service. I am also happy that Mr. Korg gave so much space to our cultural activities. . . .

From the article, however, it would appear that I alone brought the cultural program to fruition, against the opposition of members of the Board of Directors. Let me make it clear that when I first presented my program to the then president of the Y, Frank L. Weil, he promptly saw its value, became its strong advocate, and helped largely in its formulation and adoption. I could not have accomplished my objective without his full support, and I should like this fact to be part of the record.

William Kolodney
Director

Educational Dept.
YM & YWHA
New York City

The Kastner Case

To the Editor of Commentary:

My attention has been drawn to the article on the "Kastner Case" which appeared in the December 1955 number of your important monthly.

It is not my intention to enter into a discussion with Mr. Laqueur on the merits of the case, which is now *sub judice*. I may, however, say that the prosecution has lodged an appeal against this judgment which will now come before the Supreme Court. But although the Ministry of Justice, of which I have been in charge until yesterday, has thus indicated that in their opinion Judge Halevy, who tried the

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case in the first instance, came to a wrong conclusion, I nevertheless feel it my duty to take exception to some remarks of Mr. Laqueur which may be interpreted as a reflection on the character of the distinguished judge. Those innuendoes from which the reader might be led to infer that Judge Halevy might possibly have been prompted by political or personal considerations must be objected to most strongly. Judge Halevy is held in high esteem in Israel for his moral and judicial qualities, to which Mr. Ben Gurion and I myself publicly testified when a newspaper in Israel, in the heat of the controversy aroused by the judgment, made remarks in a vein similar to the spirit of Mr. Laqueur's innuendoes.

As to Mr. Laqueur's criticism that the case should have been tried not by a single judge but by a bench of, say, three, it must be pointed out that under the law of Israel, once a case is started in the District Court before a single judge, the bench cannot be enlarged afterwards, although it is possible for the District Court to try a case by three judges from the outset. But neither Judge Halevy nor the Attorney General, who appeared for the prosecution and who would otherwise have moved the Court to enlarge itself, foresaw that this libel case would assume such unusual proportions.

I should be grateful if you would publish these few lines in your magazine.

PINHAS ROSEN

Jerusalem

MR. LAQUEUR *writes:*

My article and subsequent communication ["Letters from Readers," February 1956] did not contain, I believe, any innuendo, for I said all I had to say at that time, nor did I imply any reflection on the moral and judicial qualities of Judge Halevy. The conclusions reached by Judge Halevy (and, incidentally, by many other people) may be right or wrong: this has something to do with the historical perspective of an individual, not with his character. Mr. Rosen, as former Minister of Justice, feels disposed to refrain from commenting on a case which is now *sub judice,* and he apparently expects others to do the same. However, the Kastner case in its wider implications is a historical (and political) issue of great importance. The fact that certain juridical aspects of this issue are also *sub judice* (and may remain so for years!) is a coincidence which cannot and should not put an end to the discussion of the case. Anyone who passes judgment in a case like this must expect criticism, for he is passing judgment on contemporary history. His qualifications to do so will be called in question, since many believe (as I do) that no single human being could possibly pass judgment in a case like this. This criticism is directed against a futile system of passing judgments on history in a court of law—there is no reason to misconstrue it as a personal attack.

Ahad Ha'am and Conservatism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I trust you will allow me a few lines to clarify the perplexities that your reviewer, Mr. Milton Himmelfarb, found in my book *Guideposts in Modern Judaism* (January).

I devote many pages (276-306) to the explanation of my theological approach, which calls for the viewing of the same phenomenon from an objective as well as a subjective standpoint. Religion in action and in feeling is a subjective experience, but theology is the endeavor to supplement the practice of religion with an objective analysis. . . .

In the first part of *Guideposts* I describe the movements in American Judaism objectively. This includes a high estimate of the great influence of Ahad Ha'am's thinking, especially within the Conservative movement. When, in the second part of the book, I consider what Ahad Ha'am should mean to us today, I reject his doctrines and his presuppositions.

When your reviewer suggests that, in repudiating the philosophy of Ahad Ha'am, I repudiate Conservatism, he errs in confounding a part for the whole. Ahad Ha'amism was one of the component trends in the history of the American Conservative movement, but obviously the two were not identical. Professor Moritz Lazarus, in 19th-century Germany, represented a type of Conservatism that was distinctly non-nationalistic. In place of the people as the mythical source of all that is Jewish, I substitute the stream of sacred tradition. And I consider the process of earnest self-criticism as an essential element of the living tradition. Nowhere in my book do I give any support to the notion that Conservatism should be construed as Reform plus Ahad Ha'amism. Conservatism, in my view, is a contemporary expression of "philosophical Judaism," as classical Reform is believed by its followers to be an embodiment of "prophetic Judaism."

When I speak of the mentality of some American Jews as being that of spite-racism, I refer principally to those whose Jewish consciousness is devoid of any positive convictions. It is spite-racist to say, "I am a Jew because the world dislikes us," and to identify the content of Jewishness with ethnic loyalty, since ethnicism is the least common denominator of all Jews. . . . If one must relate spite racism to Ahad Ha'amism, one could say it constitutes

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the biological drive of the will to live without the corresponding doctrine of a spiritual aspiration for an order of absolute justice. By the same token, I do not endorse every element of the American spirit when I describe its genius and its impact upon Jewish life from an objective viewpoint. In fact, I devote a section to warning against what I call "the adulation of the spirit of the age. . . ."

As to the presumed superior insight of "returners," I can only plead that this phenomenon is not without precedent in Jewish life. Already, the Talmud asserts "In the place where Baalei Teshuvah stand, the righteous cannot abide" (b. Sanhedrin, 99a).

(Rabbi) JACOB B. AGUS

Baltimore, Md.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Professor Ginsberg's reply to my communication greatly disappointed me ["Letters from Readers," March]. I said that "I assume Professor Ginsberg has *seen* a photostat of these Hebrew fragments," and I should like to know the context of the entire fragments because only the context can give us an idea of the authenticity and antiquity of the quotation from these fragments. In his reply Professor Ginsberg did not give the context but referred to a letter he had received from Father de Vaux. Also, he did not inform us of the paleography of these fragments. Are the letters archaic or medieval? Reference to Father de Vaux's letter does not give him the right to state that these fragments are genuine, of the time of Bar Kokhba. A case in point is: in the same article that he published in COMMENTARY, November 1955, he says, "We have even the Aramaic original of a pseudepigraphon (the Book of Lamech) whose existence was previously known only from an old book list, but of which no copy was extant in any language." Recently it was announced by Dr. B. Mazar, president of the Hebrew University, that the scroll in question had been unrolled and found "to be a paraphrase and commentary of the Biblical Book of Genesis written in Hebrew and Aramaic." Hence Dr. Ginsberg's statement of a discovery of a Book of Lamech was premature and baseless owing to the fact that he did not examine the text but relied on other scholars.

SOLOMON ZEITLIN

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DR. GINSBERG *writes:*

I am touched by Dr. Zeitlin's exclusive trust in me, but I am convinced that Father de Vaux is no less competent than I to evaluate the Ben Kosbah papyri, which he has had at his disposal for a few years; and I know that he will publish them, or have one of his collaborators publish them, in approved scholarly fashion at the earliest reasonable date.

The truth is that I too am humanly prone to error; as witness the case of the supposed Lamech scroll, which Dr. Zeitlin likewise wishes I had refrained from characterizing without, as he supposes, myself having seen a photograph of its text. The fact is that I did see, a few years ago, a photostat of as much as could be seen of the inside of that scroll prior to the Hebrew University's recent successful attempt to unroll it; and I still possess a copy of that particular portion of the text, which I made at that time. Yet, from the circumstance that that portion is part of a first person narrative by Lamech, I inferred, like everybody else who had seen it, that the work in question was the lost Book of Lamech; whereas, as Dr. Zeitlin correctly states, it now turns out to be in fact a work which has hitherto been entirely unknown. That such mistakes are an occupational hazard of scholarship can be illustrated from Dr. Zeitlin's own experience. In the course of his holy war upon the Dead Sea Scrolls, Dr. Zeitlin has made, *inter alia,* the following assertions; of which, since they are mutually exclusive, at least one must be wrong: to wit,

(1) that the true provenience of the scrolls is from the Cairo Genizah.

(2) that the true provenience of the scrolls is from the Hebron Yeshiva.

Dachau

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read your interesting article "Returning to Dachau" by Bruno Bettelheim, in your February 1956 issue. . . . I believe that you would appreciate the sentiments of an American-born young man, my son David, who is with the army in Germany, concerning his visit to Dachau. He describes that visit and says: "I saw a ghost—a ghost that says tell the world. . . . Just as we are told to tell our children of the going out of Egypt, so I believe we should tell of the going in to Dachau. . . ."

JACOB H. GREENFELD

Baltimore, Maryland

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Discrimination and Science

PREJUDICE AND YOUR CHILD. By KENNETH B. CLARK. Beacon Press. 151 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by BRUNO BETTELHEIM

BECAUSE Kenneth B. Clark's *Prejudice and Your Child* is written out of the most laudable intentions, it raises again the very serious question of how far a good cause can be served by unsubstantial or even specious arguments made in its favor. And because it is a book which removes a problem of social justice from the realm of ethics to that of the social sciences, it raises equally serious questions about the ground of moral decisions.

Everyone, of course, agrees theoretically that ends do not justify means, but most of us have a way of forgetting this when the goal is very deeply cherished. Then nearly any false reasoning on the part of a friend who shares one's over-all view seems permissible; there is a temptation to shrug and overlook errors in regard to details lest the enemy be provided with ammunition.

This attitude bespeaks little confidence in the power of a good cause to triumph without violating truth. I do not share such pessimism; I believe that the liberal position, be it in race relations or civil liberties, is strong enough to weather successfully any justified criticisms. I further believe that exposing erroneous arguments for the liberal position—particularly when this is done by friends rather than enemies—is a way of strengthening that position. I hold finally that the cause of social justice is far better served by treating the moral issues involved frankly as moral issues and not as neutral scientific data.

Professor Clark is one of many liberal sociologists and anthropologists who believe that prejudice is always psychologically harmful to everyone concerned—to the member of a White Citizens council no less than to the Negro—and who also think that scientific evidence supports this belief. My own experience in the study of prejudice has convinced me that, while our present methods of investigation do indeed permit us to say *why* a person is prejudiced, or *which* personality types tend to harbor racial prejudice, they by no means give us warrant to predict whether such persons would be happier if they were to become tolerant. Valid scientific arguments suggest that, though prejudice is always a social and economic disadvantage to the victim of discrimination, it sometimes serves vital needs for the victimizer by providing an outlet for discharging internal pressures. But the scientific approach to racial discrimination has not yet given us a means of determining whether such an outlet can be justified.

I recall only too well the "scientific" arguments propagated by Goebbels purporting to prove that racist doctrine was an advantage to the German people. I also recall that those who opposed Goebbels on moral grounds, rather than because he was being unscientific, were able to hold fast even when surrounded by an ocean of racism. Considerations of prudence and strategy tell us, then, that it is wiser to base the case for tolerance on ethics rather than on science. Whether we shall ever be able to find unequivocal scientific evidence in favor of tolerance, I do not know. But we must recognize from the start that the issue is a moral one, to be decided on moral grounds, regardless of whether present methods of investigation can provide the supporting scientific arguments or not.

"Your child—every child—is harmed by prejudice in the neighborhood, in the school, and in the nation," reads the blurb on the dust-jacket of Professor Clark's book, and it is a fair statement of his thesis. It is also obviously untrue. Of course, some, perhaps many, children suffer because of their own prejudice, but it can never be demonstrated that all children do. It should be possible to destroy the prejudice that one race is superior to another without reinforcing that other prejudice which asserts

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that we can determine scientifically what attitudes or feelings harm *every* child. Nothing is gained by replacing the outrageous claims of the racists with equally unfounded, all-encompassing declarations on the part of those fighting for tolerance. The liberal in particular should beware of echoing the claim of the totalitarians who say they know what is best for everybody.

To assert that racial prejudice is bad and racial discrimination vile, is to make a moral decision. Such an assertion should never depend on the assumption that it is *always* to one's own practical interest, as scientifically determined, not to practice racial discrimination. What, for example, would Professor Clark make of the ancient Greek's prejudice against the "barbarism" of his neighbors? To feel superior to these barbarians may have been, and probably was, morally unjustified if not positively wicked. But it would be hard to demonstrate through scientific investigation that it had bad consequences for the ancient Greeks and the Western world in general. Reasoning from consequences, it would be even harder to prove that slavery in ancient Greece was an evil, for without slavery there would have been no leisure, and hence no Plato or Aristotle. I do not mean this as an argument for slavery; I merely want to suggest that the example of ancient Greece might be used to prove that slavery is desirable if practical consequences are to be invoked as the deciding factor in moral issues.

WHAT happens when an effort is made to decide ethical problems on the assumed findings of social scientists, or on the basis of the utilitarian definition of the good as that which benefits the greatest number of people at any given moment, can be seen from almost every page of Professor Clark's book. He endorses, for example, the familiar presumption that meeting children of different races and religions in school leads to better racial and religious relations, and at the same time increases the child's social competence and his "chances for personal and moral stability."

Having, as a Jewish boy, attended non-segregated schools in Germany and Austria, I know this to be blatantly untrue. Indeed, it was the non-segregated German public schools where the seeds of racism and ultra-nationalism took firm root, while most children who went to Catholic parochial schools turned out (even under the Nazis) to be much less prejudiced, not only against Jews but Poles and Czechs as well. The fact is that Professor Clark, using similar questionnaires and sampling methods, might very easily have collected an even larger mass of data to support the opposite point of view.

Neither questionnaires nor statistics are a guarantee of scientific detachment, and certainly not of consistency. On one page Professor Clark tells us that discrimination violates the most cherished American beliefs and hence creates deep inner conflicts, while on another he points out that "the American creed and racial discrimination are not contradictory but compatible elements of American history and social psychology. Each has the same motivation—an intense drive for status and security." Here he seems momentarily aware that some individuals achieve a sense of status and security by feeling superior to members of minority groups. It follows that while the children of a minority group may be harmed by discrimination in their striving for status, children of the majority (or of socially superior groups) who can find security in this *and in no other way* are helped psychologically by the "permission" to discriminate.

This fact, which contradicts the basic thesis of the book, is lost in the flood of Professor Clark's benevolent, non-scientific, intentions. "Racial prejudices," he believes, "are indications of a disturbed and potentially unstable society." Actually, some of the most stable (i.e., conservative) societies in history were based on the exclusion of all foreigners, or on unalterable class or caste distinctions. Why, in any case, should stability be set up as a criterion of social health? Does not the author himself spend most of his book propagandizing for rapid social change?

Professor Clark also tends to view maladjustment among members of the in-group as either a cause or effect of discrimination and segregation. It should by now be common knowledge that an individual can be quite well adjusted and still hold intolerant attitudes. I might refer in this context to a study of prejudice made by Professor Morris Janowitz and myself which showed that among the middle and lower classes it is usually the better adjusted individual who upholds the prejudices prevailing in his milieu. Because he fails to recognize this, Professor Clark finds it a "paradox" that "individuals who profess strong re-

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ligious affiliations are more likely to be prejudiced than others who do not." This is no paradox at all, but another indication that the members of socially stable groups tend to be more prejudiced than others: strong religious affiliation usually breeds religious in-group identification, with consequent suspicion of all out-groups. In addition, Professor Clark does not distinguish clearly between *inner* personal stability (which, by and large, is more frequently achieved in contemporary America by the mildly discriminating and prejudiced person) and the stability of society as a *whole* (which may or may not be threatened by discrimination).

IT SPEAKS for Professor Clark's honesty that he reports data in obvious contradiction to his thesis—though he does not always realize it. For example, he notes that when children were asked, in a test, to color the drawing of a boy or a girl, "nearly 80 per cent of the southern Negro children colored their preferences brown, whereas only 36 per cent of the northern Negro children did. Furthermore, over 20 per cent of the northern [Negro] children colored their preferences in a bizarre color, while only five per cent of the southern [Negro] children did. A record of the spontaneous remarks of the children showed that 80 per cent of the southern children spoke as they worked, but only 20 per cent of the northern children did so."

Such results expose the severe psychological difficulties created by desegregation. The Northern child finds it far more difficult than the Southern to accept himself as a Negro. And we know from the experience of second-generation white Americans that desegregation does not necessarily make for greater security in their case either.

How hard it is to remain scientifically objective when one is really a moral partisan may be seen again from another passage. Two pages after Professor Clark reports on the obvious difficulties of the Northern Negro child in identifying with the in-group (as revealed, among other things, by the coloring test), he claims that the personality adjustment of the Northern is healthier than that of the Southern Negro. This he supports with the following statement: "Statistics of admissions of Negroes to northern state hospitals for the mentally ill show that the annual rate of admission of northern-born Negroes is 40 per 100,000, compared to 186 per 100,000 for those Negroes who were born and lived in the south. These figures, striking in themselves, become even more significant when they are compared with the annual rate of admission of 45 for northern-born whites." The only inference we can draw from these figures is not that Northern Negroes are better adjusted than Southern ones, but that it creates great emotional stress to move from a segregated to a non-segregated area, so much so that it increases the incidence of severe mental illness by 450 per cent.

The conclusion would seem to be that the Southern Negro ought to stay put for the sake of his mental health. Fortunately, this is not necessarily true, since a valid comparison between admission of Northern and Southern Negroes to mental hospitals would require a comparison of Negro admissions in the North with parallel data for Southern state hospitals. Probably, even this would not be conclusive, since a variety of other factors, such as socio-economic and educational levels (none of which Professor Clark mentions) determine whether a family keeps the mentally ill person at home or hospitalizes him. The argument was suggested only to show how far a social scientist can stray from scientific detachment when he wishes to support a thesis close to his heart.

I HAVE gone to some lengths in pointing out the inner contradictions that inevitably emerge when the demand for racial equality is based on data from the social sciences or individual psychology. Psychologically speaking, it is just not true that what benefits one benefits all, or that what hurts one hurts all. Social and political equality are issues of justice and morality, not of psychological utilitarianism. It is not even true that strides toward greater racial equality will make everybody happier. But it certainly will make a *juster*, more *human* world to live in.

The Party of Ideas?

A DEMOCRAT LOOKS AT HIS PARTY. By DEAN ACHESON. Harper. 199 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by R. F. TANNENBAUM

POLITICS is an art which deals in ideas and interests. The voters' interests must be served; otherwise they vote for somebody else. This means that the policies of a party, in or out of

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office, must be framed in response to the demands expressed by the various "interest groups" which make up the electorate; that is the practical politician's job. But it is not enough to know what the people want—one must also know how to get it for them. This means that a party must produce ideas, creative solutions to the hard problems of modern life that will appeal to the voters and further their interests; that is the intellectual's job in politics. The rare man who can do both, who can create an idea which arouses and serves an interest the people did not know they had, is called a statesman.

Dean Acheson, in *A Democrat Looks at His Party*—a stimulating and elegant essay on the two-party system—compares our parties with regard to both interests and ideas, and gives the Democrats top marks in each case. The Democrats, he says, are and always have been a coalition of "many interests" and, as a result, always have the interest of the broad mass of the people at heart. For the same reason, they are willing to apply every governmental power to the advancement of the general good, and are able, by mutual reconciliation of conflicting interests, to arrive at an optimum policy for the nation as a whole. The Republicans never do any of these things, he says, because they represent only "one interest," that of business.

This is not only inaccurate, but a dangerous thing for Democrats to think in this election year. Any political party, to survive on a nation-wide scale in a country as diverse as ours, has to be a coalition of varied and even opposing interest groups, regional, economic, and otherwise, that shape party policy by a process of pulling and hauling among them. Much as Republican leaders may like businessmen, they know there are not enough of them to swing an election. Most businessmen like Secretary Benson's agricultural policy as it is, yet the demands of various farming interests are now reshaping it out of all recognition. Business itself is not a single interest, but a collection of many special interests often in open conflict: different kinds of businessmen were on both sides of the Republican fight over tariff reform in 1954. Indeed, the real issue is not that business is the one interest the party represents, but that the Republicans, particularly under Eisenhower, tend to favor the many special interests of business over the interest of the general welfare.

A warm, nostalgic account of a Jewish childhood in Edinburgh by the renowned writer

David Daiches

David Daiches' father was the rabbi of the tiny Hebrew congregation in Edinburgh—an extraordinary man who believed that his people could be true to their own traditions yet play a respected part in Scottish social and cultural life. Here is the delightful story of a talented and fascinating family—of going to school and growing up in

Two Worlds

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Harcourt, Brace and Company

Now the Democrats claim that the coalition of interests they have represented since 1932 —labor, the small farmer, minority groups, the South—includes most of the common people, so that the Democrats are always the party of the general welfare. The trouble is that, in the 1950's, there are fewer and fewer common people. Fifty-two per cent of American families now earn between $3,000 and $7,500 a year, 40 per cent earn $5,000 or more. Well over 50 per cent now own their own homes. And this sort of tax-paying, property-owning middle class has traditionally been a Republican interest. This does not mean that the Republicans can't lose, but it does mean that the Democrats can no longer automatically win. Certainly Eisenhower was the decisive factor in the Republican victory of 1952, but that victory was also the political expression of a great social change which will not be cancelled out when "Ike" retires. Democrats who follow Mr. Acheson in thinking that the Republicans can only represent the interests of business, or who believe that the New Deal coalition of the underprivileged still represents the general welfare, are likely to find themselves leading

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WRITERS

Short stories, simple plays, pageants on Zionist and Israeli themes suitable for use in Jewish camps, should be submitted to **Camp Department, American Zionist Council, 342 Madison Avenue, New York 17.**

Material should be written with interests of 12 year old children in mind, designed to create a sympathetic understanding of life in Israel and convey an appreciation of Zionist philosophy and accomplishments.

invisible battalions against an enemy who isn't there.

BUT these are matters of practical politics; Mr. Acheson is on firmer ground when he deals with the political role of ideas. The policies of the Democrats, because they boldly use the powers of government for the people's good, require "knowledge, perceptiveness, imagination—in other words, brains. . . . So the Democratic party is hospitable to and attracts intellectuals. It has work for them to do. . . . The Republican party is cool to intellectuals, unless they are lawyers, when they talk about government. They are apt to be called 'eggheads,' 'radicals,' or 'pinkos' for their pains."

The Democrats do seem to attract a higher percentage of intellectuals, and to make better use of them, than their opponents do. Just the reverse used to be true; nearly every college professor in the country was a Whig—as long as there were such things. But the progressive ferment at the turn of the century (Mr. Acheson himself switched to the Democrats in 1912), and the general reaction against "Babbitry" in the 20's, turned most of the American intellectual community against conservatism and the Republican cause. There is now some movement in the other direction, but it does not seem to have made great headway. As for the Republicans, they have a tradition of practical-mindedness which makes them prefer to employ lawyers like Dewey and Dulles, or engineers like the two Herbert Hoovers and C. E. Wilson. Mr. Acheson implies that the Democrats' kind of intellectual (the man of liberal education?) is more creative, and cites the Democratic achievements of 1932-52 as evidence. The imaginative economic and social policies of the New Deal, and the brilliant improvisations of American foreign policy in the first years of the cold war, both more impressive than anything the Republicans have come up with before or since, show that the Democrats are the party of ideas. To me the interesting question is whether this is still the case. The Democrats, facing an election amid a fast-changing situation at home and abroad, could use some bold new ideas. Are they getting them? Mr. Acheson's own book must be taken in evidence.

THE second section of Mr. Acheson's book develops an extraordinarily cogent and intelligent argument for a policy of watchful waiting and limited warfare in the face of the dangers of atomic conflict. He has many excellent things to say against the advocates of preventive war, and against Secretary Dulles's policy of "massive retaliation." He speaks instructively on the limits of total victory, which ends war but does not make peace, and on the possibility that ours must be, like the 18th century, an age of localized wars. He has an original suggestion on the effectiveness of nuclear disarmament: what, he asks, would prevent a disarmed enemy, once a "conventional" war broke out, from developing and using atomic weapons as the war went on? On the whole, these chapters constitute by far the best treatment of foreign policy in the atomic age that I have read. But on the new situation which has developed since the Geneva conferences, which would seem to call for a whole range of new policies over and above the fundamentals of living with the bomb, Mr. Acheson has curiously little to say; probably most of his book was written before Geneva, and possibly he is as perplexed about what these policies should be as most of the rest of us are. Yet now, if ever, is the time for the sort of imaginative innovation in foreign policy of which Mr. Acheson and his colleagues showed themselves so capable just a few years ago; it is a disappointment to find so little of this here.

To make up for this, Mr. Acheson strikes out boldly on the subject of the Federal loyalty-security program and its impact on individual rights. In an area in which most public figures have been notable for treading on eggs, Mr. Acheson works up a magnificent indignation. He takes full responsibility for having acceded to the original Truman loyalty program, which he now regards as a howling error in judgment, a retreat from principle that should be reversed without delay. Originally designed "for cases which it was thought would be serious, sensitive and rare," the system of secret investigations and extra-judicial hearings has gotten completely out of hand. It has decimated and demoralized the intellectuals in public service, obstructing that continuous creation of ideas on which sound policy depends. And even

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worse, it has corroded the principles on which the civil liberties of all of us rest. What is to be done? Mr. Acheson would have us substantially scrap the security program as it stands. No more covert investigations of all civil servants, no more secret dossiers and faceless informers. Let the professional boards of the services concerned decide on the fitness of new employees, and let security cases in sensitive positions be brought into open court, where the accused can have the full protection of the normal rules of evidence. This, it seems to me, is not only boldness, it is throwing caution to the winds. Mr. Acheson is dead right on the magnitude of the evil, and on the direction in which we must go to correct it, but he would take us too far; without a system of blanket secret investigations, the government's hands would effectively be tied in coping with infiltration by Communists. By all means let us have far more stringent legal safeguards for the public servant under investigation. Let us have him investigated by more intelligent security officers, certainly. But we must also be able to investigate him.

Otherwise, Mr. Acheson has little to contribute on domestic affairs; foreign policy and civil liberties are what interest him. These are the fields that claim the interest of Democratic intellectuals in general nowadays. Domestic policy, economic and social policy, these seem to be dead issues.

For one thing, the dominating position, in terms of votes, of the new middle-class interest makes present-day politics steer clear of social proposals. Moderation is the watchword. For another, conservative majorities in Congress have blocked major social legislation since 1938; those who want change in this direction have learned to look elsewhere for it. The guaranteed annual wage and school desegregation were both achieved outside politics, and the power of the unions and the courts steals New Dealers' thunder.

But if there is one area in which the Democrats today need new ideas in the worst way, it is just in social and economic policy. Automation is certain at least to disrupt employment during the next ten years, and will probably reduce it; this is an issue which could take labor right out of the middle class and set off a whole new realignment of interests. A danger to the workingman, this is an opportunity for the Democrats—if they can be ready with the policies the situation calls for. Mr. Acheson gives automation and its effects a page and a half; he makes a sound suggestion on the use of public works to take up any slack in unemployment, but for the rest can only advise that the Democrats, as the party of ideas, are the people to deal with this crisis—"How," he admits, "I do not know." And neither will most other Democratic intellectuals, unless they promptly turn their attention to domestic affairs. A retraining and relocation program for displaced workers, legislation tying the progressive reduction of the work week to the level of unemployment—this is the sort of thing they should be putting their minds to. In foreign affairs, too, the new technology calls for new policies; with automatic factories, we could provide underdeveloped countries with a short cut to industrialization that would bypass their lack of skilled labor; the Russians are already trying this out in Manchuria. Automation, commercial atomic power, semi-artificial foodstuffs already produced in the laboratory—a crash program to develop all this for use abroad is probably our best answer to the Khrushchev version of Point Four.

From Mr. Acheson we get nothing along these lines. If the Democrats are the party of ideas, they should be producing a program now to deal with the problems of the new technology before they get out of hand. If the Democrats are the party of the people's interests, they should be alerting the voters to what their true interests are in a new age and how they can be protected. That they are not doing this does not invalidate Mr. Acheson's claims for his party. The Democrats can be proud of the record of both their practical politicians and their intellectuals. The only thing is, the times demand something more than either can be expected to supply; what their party needs now, what the country needs now, is statesmanship.

A Rare Interpreter

CERTAIN PEOPLE OF THE BOOK. By MAURICE SAMUEL. Knopf. 363 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by SPENCER BROWN

BIBLICAL elucidation is as old as the text of the Bible itself, not only because of the greatness of the Book, but also because of its abundance

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of contradictions, gnomic utterances, ellipses due to conscious art, and omissions due to unsophisticated narration. Unfortunately much of this elucidation is mere obfuscation—vain repetition and pedantry. But these are peccadillos compared with the crimes of most Biblical popularization, which coats the narrative with a gummy mixture of piety and coziness.

Yet Maurice Samuel, scholar, critic, novelist, and translator, sets out, in *Certain People of the Book*, both to elucidate and to popularize, seemingly unaware of the horrendous difficulties of either undertaking, and does both with ease and modesty. One of the most engaging aspects of his book is its assumption, innocent or elegantly feigned, that almost any attentive reader of the Scriptures could come up with much the same sort of thing. This polite absurdity aside, however, Mr. Samuel keeps a balance between humor and reverence, humanity and mysticism, speculation and faith, exegesis and simplicity. He avoids both sentimentality and religiosity.

Certain People of the Book is ostensibly a series of character studies—of Ahasuerus, Balaam, Naomi, Rebekah, the three principal wives of David, Jezebel, and Joseph, together with thumbnail sketches of "the supporting cast." It is hard for one who is not an expert to tell how much is original in Mr. Samuel's treatment. Perhaps at this date originality in commenting on the Bible is no longer possible. But if it is still possible, Mr. Samuel has achieved it.

Consider, for example, his analysis of Balaam. Traditionally Balaam has been understood to be, on the one hand, one of the greatest of the prophets or, on the other hand, an evil self-seeker who wishes to curse rather than bless the Israelites in order to get King Balak's money—or, paradoxically, both these characters. Mr. Samuel goes beyond even the paradox and finds Balaam to be a fool, not comic, but sinister and even disgusting. "Balaam's temporary blindness was real, but it was purposive and obsessional. He knew perfectly what it was that he could not see and what the ass saw. Hence his towering rage." "I shall perhaps be laughed at, but only by those who have never become acquainted with the lunacies of the artist. Balaam wants primarily to be an independent power, controlling a part of the universe. He does not care a goat's bleat about Moab, or about Israel, about who defeats whom, and who is to be destroyed. He wants a share of the omnipotence and he thinks, God help us, that he has found a way of turning the trick. He will compel God to have him say what *he* wants, not what God wants."

If Mr. Samuel can do this with Balaam, we may expect more and even better on characters as complex as David and Joseph. And we are not disappointed. The portrait of David is deft and realistic, though only incidental to the studies of the three women. The analysis of Joseph, however, is full and devastating. Mr. Samuel takes issue with Thomas Mann's elaborate retelling of the Joseph cycle, perhaps wilfully overlooking some of its irony (for it is barely possible that Mann's loving portrait may be taken ironically, as a consistently savage caricature, just as it is possible, or even likely, that Melville's retelling of the Jonah story is an attack on God rather than on Jonah). In any case Mr. Samuel's quiet scholarship makes Mann's encyclopedic learning look cumbersome, often superfluous, and sometimes wrong. Mann is mistaken about the nature of the blessing of Abraham, which descends, Mr. Samuel shows, to all the sons of Jacob, not to Judah alone. And Joseph is at war with his brothers for domination, not for the blessing.

Joseph's greatness is that of an economic and social theorist and as "a manipulator of public affairs." He saves Egypt and—as a sort of afterthought, in a nasty, cat-and-mouse fashion—saves his own people. His reward is to be forgotten by the Egyptians after a few generations and to be revered by his own people forever. He has a supremely attractive personality and a peculiarly repellent character: in Shakespearean phrase he is one of those "who, moving others, are themselves as stone." In his relations with Potiphar's wife he is as inhuman as Hippolytus—with less reason—and nearly suffers the same fate; in his long-drawn-out revenge of practical joking on his brothers and even on Jacob he reveals himself as a monster.

Nor unreasonably, Mr. Samuel treats the chronicles as history, history more reliable than any we are likely to construct for remote times. Yet he is not concerned with the physical truth or falsity of miracles. "For me the burning bush, and the splitting of the Red Sea, and the thunder on Sinai are symbols of miracles, and I do not care how they are philosophized away. But who shall philosophize away the two

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seemingly harmless phrases: 'Thou art the man,' and: 'Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?' And who shall explain how the prophetic presence smote two such different men alike, without portents and without apparitions, but with simple, everyday syllables?"

THE apparently naive stories of the Bible have always been used as launching platforms for all sorts of intricate moralizing rockets—one-stage, two-stage, and duds. Mr. Samuel's rockets are generally two-stage and are never duds. For example, on Uriah the Hittite: "He was either a hypocrite or a brutal pedant. . . . At best he was a brave, stupid, speechifying man, and what he said to the king . . . was pompously tactless. I hear it objected: 'One should not talk like that about a man who was murdered.' I do not see how getting oneself murdered improves one's character; and God help justice if we must admire a victim of aggression before we undertake to protect him wholeheartedly." And on Jezebel: "She makes me see the meaninglessness of 'the virtues'; and in a manner I can never satisfactorily express she has convinced me that courage, loyalty, endurance, and all the other admired qualities are no more moral in themselves than a sound digestion, or a well-planned behavior pattern, which is only a system of conditioned reflexes. These things have nothing to do with goodness. They are good only as possessed by a good person, and they are horrible when possessed by a bad person. Such views get me in trouble with other people because I deprive them of the common refuge from moral emptiness; they get me in trouble with myself for the same reason."

At his best Mr. Samuel's reading of parts of the Bible is analogous to Dover Wilson's *What Happens in "Hamlet."* He shows, I think for the first time, what actually happens in the story of Isaac and Esau and Jacob. Isaac "blesses" Jacob by mistake, not wishfully blind but genuinely thinking him to be his preferred Esau, unaware that Rebekah has effected a switch. But Isaac knows as well as Rebekah that Esau is no fit vessel for *the* blessing, the blessing of Abraham; hence he gives a neutral blessing, such as might be given any son by any reasonably prophetic father. When he discovers the deception, he gives the real Esau a similar blessing: there is almost nothing to choose between the two. The true blessing he saves for Jacob as Jacob is departing for Laban's country; Isaac's judgment overcomes his emotional preference, and the gift with its awesome responsibility is preserved in the right line.

Nowhere do Mr. Samuel's critical understanding and sympathy show so brilliantly as in his discussion of the story of Ruth, which he insists is really the story of Naomi. He demonstrates the power of omission as a literary technique; he portrays Naomi as a person who inspires profound love, as a beneficent schemer who knows well that at certain times the highest art of managing things is to do nothing; he explains the reason for Boaz' astonishing loquacity as embarrassment at having neglected his kinfolk upon their arrival.

Some scholars, assigning a late date to the composition of the Book of Ruth, feel bound to find it inferior to the earlier and therefore greater books. Mary Ellen Chase says, "Slight in its emotional appeal and its simple presentation of human psychology, it, nevertheless, is told with ease and charm and is brief enough so that its lack of variety in style does not become monotonous." So vainly must the scholarly conscience struggle against the judgment of mankind; if the first chapter of the Book of Ruth is slight in emotional appeal, then Schubert's song cycles are routine and Emily Dickinson's poetry academic. Mr. Samuel's learning stands him in better stead: he can see complexity of action and motivation beneath the simple surface, and he can say, of the first chapter, "We listen, awed, across the interval of three thousand years."

The tone of this review may suggest that Mr. Samuel is the messiah of Bible interpreters, for whom the ages have been waiting. Such an impression would be false, and he would be the first to disclaim anything more than enlightened common sense and the ability to read sympathetically, humorously, and perceptively. We concur; but we cannot help noting how rare and precious such gifts are.

Middlebrow Tuning Fork

A WIFE IS MANY WOMEN. By DORIS FLEISCHMAN BERNAYS. Crown. 209 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by
LILLIAN BLUMBERG MCCALL

IN THIS book, which is only superficially about women but more specifically about the irrita-

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tions endemic to our culture, Mrs. Bernays, niece by marriage of Sigmund Freud, wife and business partner of publicist Edward L. Bernays, and mother of two married daughters, casts a critical eye on the overly complicated mechanics of life in a technological society. Many of her suggestions for simplifying life excite admiration: "Kitchens might be hosed from top to bottom, the water running out through a floor drain. . . . Why not vermin-proof all equipment, remove dust automatically? Light interrupters would permit us modestly to keep shades up and let summer breezes in." Damn the expense! These are all wonderful ideas.

ALL of Mrs. Bernays's proposed innovations stress efficiency and time-saving as a technique for reducing the stresses and strains, the harassments and fatigues that accompany what used to be called "the tempo of modern life." I was particularly intrigued by her conception of a properly laid out department store: "Display rooms, equipped with television, motion pictures, slides, robot mannequins and miniature models . . . would be the basic sales machinery . . . the customer would be directed to Display Room 1-H where, seated on foam rubber, he would see cutlery, pots, dishwashers and towels shown to him in an electronic 3D parade. Electronic inventories . . . recorded voice descriptions would give you necessary facts." A fascinating picture of an America so glutted by the good things of life that luxury itself has become burdensome. O brave new world that exists not in fancy but in fact!

Because, like America, she has been singularly blessed by the gods, Mrs. Bernays is a faithful mirror of the American *Zeitgeist*, a tuning fork for middlebrow aspirations. Born of a rich German Jewish family, remarkably pretty to judge from her picture, finding in her professional partnership with her husband a happy solution of the career-versus-marriage dilemma, her social circle adorned by the rich and the famous, Mrs. Bernays has earned an exalted rank in our status hierarchy, not simply as the appendage of a rich and successful man but by her own achievement. We may dismiss as coyness her claim that she is "an 'average woman' whose housewifely problems are common to all average women." Comparatively few women face the problem of "Twenty-two guests for dinner four times a week and twenty-two additional people for a hot midnight snack," or having to cope with a staff of nine servants.

Mrs. Bernays's concerns are the concerns of the middle class: shopping, child-rearing, and having the right opinions. Highly susceptible to the fads and fancies that beguile public enthusiasm, she shares the public contempt for an outmoded theory. When behaviorism was the rage her first child was strictly conditioned, and when Watson went into eclipse she swung over to permissiveness, demand feeding, and progressive education. How typical of the prevailing anxiety of what Malcolm Cowley calls our "pedocratic society" is her tortured self-examination as to whether she has done everything possible for the psychological welfare of her children—a measure of our national inability to bear the thought that we cannot protect our children from all the storms of life. Nor are we surprised to find that her social judgments are harshly colored by popular psychoanalysis, an attitude of mind that does not allow for charity: "How often teeth in action have revealed the emotions of polite eaters. One evening a lawyer told us his wife had alienated their son. She laughed sweetly now and then protesting. . . . But we knew George was right. She worked steadily at a bowl of nuts. Crunch, crunch. She was gnawing at her own bones, her anxieties, her shame, her regrets."

Typical, too, are the sentimental *non sequiturs* of middlebrow liberal idealism: "If I cannot trust my good friend, Joe, to omit a few rotten apples, how can I believe in the good faith of delegates to the United Nations? When I find that the cashier has added two dollars to my slip three days in a row, how can I reassure myself that governments are honest?"

Mrs. Bernays, whose family has been American for a hundred years, urges a typically American remedy for the problems and discomforts of luxury—a hair of the dog that bites us. More and better experts, more psychoanalysts (who won't however, "misread" Freud), more efficient marketing practices, and houses whose functional marvels would make the present "rancho with every wanted deluxe feature" look like a mud hut. Mrs. Bernays never worries about the cost of anything; her concern is with imperfection not deprivation. And this mirage of the ultimate lying just ahead is what gives to *A Wife Is Many Women* its unique American flavor.

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Unhistorical Novels

SATAN IN GORAY. By ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER. Translated by Jacob Sloan. Noonday. 239 pp. $3.00.

THE PROPHET. By SHOLEM ASCH. Translated by Arthur Saul Super. Putnam. 343 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by JUDD L. TELLER

THE two foremost living Yiddish writers of fiction, seventy-five-year-old Sholem Asch and Isaac Bashevis Singer, younger by nearly a quarter of a century, are each represented on the publishers' lists this season with a novel in English translation. It is a little unfair to set *The Prophet* and *Satan in Goray* side by side, one of Asch's poorest books, one of Bashevis Singer's best. *Satan in Goray* established itself as a classic some twenty years ago, and is still so regarded. *The Prophet,* on the other hand, is Asch's latest work, the fourth of his "neo-Christian" novels and perhaps the least successful. Like the originals of most of his recent books, the Yiddish version of *The Prophet* has remained in manuscript.

Even in translation one can sense how different these two writers are as Yiddish stylists. The contrast is not merely personal; Asch and Bashevis represent the two basic modes of Yiddish prose developed during the half-century embraced by their work. Asch's style, which always seems baroque and a bit too precious in translation, is a wondrous thing to behold in the original. Out of mutilated syntax, whorled phraseology, and entangled jargon, emerges an art primordial and overwhelming in its effect. This rarely comes through the translation. By contrast, Bashevis is a careful, meticulous craftsman. His images are precise, his effects are deliberate, and when he uses, as he often does, obsolete and archaic Yiddish, it is by choice, to create an atmosphere, and not for lack of linguistic resources. Asch fuses apocryphal and neo-romantic strains; Bashevis is almost a naturalist, but given at times to hallucinations.

ASCH deals with contemporary Polish Jewry, and even the American Jewish scene, as though he were writing about the ancient or mythical past. His sympathetic characters have the dimension of *lamed vav* or saints; his negative characters are either penitents or incorrigible sinners. This is not to imply that Asch cannot draw from life; but he always contrives, whether fortuitously or by design, to add that extra dab of color, that extra degree of stage-lighting, which somehow converts everything into a performance. It is probably this knack for pageantry that accounts for the commercial success of Asch's latest novels.

Asch was born in the last days of Haskalah, when that movement was beginning to view the ghetto more benevolently and to romanticize Hasidism, without, however, yielding any of its aspirations for intercourse with the modern world. From the yeshiva, he went to Peretz's literary court in Warsaw, and from there to Berlin (where Thomas Mann and others acclaimed him), and finally to the United States. Along the way, he managed to get a glimpse of Russia on the eve of Bolshevism. With all its catastrophic changes, this was not life, but a historical pageant. Hasidism had already disposed Asch towards the mystical, the Messianic, and a pietistic kind of sensualism

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(the essence of Hasidism being the revelation of God in all natural phenomena). The life of the Polish aristocracy around him in his youth gave him his first view of a different kind of sensualism. The lurid backgrounds of his "neo-Christian" novels are really drawn from his early Polish environment, and their apocalyptic visions probably from his impressions of the Russian Revolution and post-1918 Berlin.

THE environment in which Bashevis spent his formative years was quite different, and not at all conducive to a feel for the spectacular or voluptuous. Asch's *shtetl* was close to nature: children played in orchards, got lost in forests, swam in rivers. Bashevis's adolescence knew only the squalid streets of the Warsaw Jewish district. His father was a needy and ascetic rabbi, strait-laced and austere. Polish Jewish society at the time of his first literary efforts had already been jarred by the 1914 war and the Orthodox way of life was beginning to disintegrate fast, with no new principle of order arising to take its place. Polish nationalism excluded the Jew; Communism meant a ruthless dictatorship; Zionism, hampered by British White Papers, assumed the aspect of another false Messianism. The anticipation of Messianic Redemption that had brightened the era into which Asch was born had faded, leaving Polish Jewry disheartened and disoriented. If life could strike Asch as a pageant, to Bashevis it looked more like a bad dream, and in *The Family Moskat,* published in English translation some years ago, he depicted the drifting of postwar Polish Jewry in that light.

Both Asch and Bashevis are attracted to apocalyptic periods, but where Asch views them as a beginning and promise, Bashevis sees them as doom. This opposition is evident in the two novels at hand. *Satan in Goray* shows us the crumbling fabric of Jewish life in a mid-17th century community (an actual one) that, having endured the horrible Chmelnitzky pogroms, was overwhelmed by the mad hopes and despairs of the Sabbatai Zvi movement. *The Prophet* treats of a somewhat analogous situation (analogous perhaps because Asch makes it so)—the Babylonian Diaspora at the critical moment when Cyrus's conquests were stirring dreams of deliverance among the exiled Jews—dreams to be realized in part by the restoration of Judea, not as a sovereign state, but as a Jewish national home. Asch here is at his most baroque, sacrificing character to pageantry.

Bashevis writing with remarkable felicity in the archaic style of the Hebrew *pinkassim* (a kind of community chronicle) manages to achieve a veritable *tour de force* of Hebraic Yiddish. The English translation by Jacob Sloan, though it falls short, as it must, of the original, is superb, and conveys a real sense of the author's virtuosity as a Yiddish stylist. The effect of the novel as a whole is marred, however, by its conclusion—a rhymed prayer, or "counsel": "Let none attempt to force the Lord; to end our pain within the world, etc., etc."—which seems too cutely pietistic coming from the pen of a modern author.

ALTHOUGH the novelist is not obliged to tell the whole historical truth, the reviewer may point out where, in his failure to do so, he might mislead the uninformed reader. Goray was the scene of a fateful struggle between traditional rational-legalistic Judaism and a prophetic pseudo-Christianity that sought to insinuate itself into the House of Israel. Rabbinic Judaism won out, but Bashevis does not do sufficient justice to its victory. Indeed, when the decrepit, ailing Rabbi Ashkenazi, who represents the Rabbinic answer to Sabbatai Zvi, dies in a state of hallucinatory excitement begging to be taken from the "battlefield," we are left with a feeling that there was no victory here at all. In point of fact, the note of despair on which Bashevis's novel ends was not the dénouement, but only a concomitant of the events in Goray.

It is in line with Bashevis's tendency to simplify the story and keep it intra-mural that the role played by Christian influences in the Messianic delusions of the Jews of Goray is virtually overlooked. The only extenuating circumstance he grants his Jews is the suffering and martyrdom at Chmelnitzky's hands which preceded their self-abasement. Asch, on the other hand, glories in a kind of Christologizing Messianism, even projecting it back into a Jewish movement that was essentially national in spirit, and that long pre-dated the birth of Messianism.

THE facts are quite simple. In Babylon the Judean exiles met the Israelites, their predecessors in dispersion, and found it possible to reachieve unity with them in an alien land. Tribalism thus matured into nationalism. Zealots among the exiles established contact with like-minded groups back home in Judea

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and all sorts of plots were laid for an insurrection against the Babylonian overlord. The prophet Ezekiel delivered repeated warnings against any rash undertaking, which, he declared, would only end in calamity and compound Jewish martyrdom. Then news came of Cyrus's amazing conquests.

Like Napoleon, the Persian King entered the scene as a liberator of subjugated peoples and a champion of religious freedom. Having realized early the Jews' importance in the Babylonian economy, he understood that a restored Judea could serve as a buffer between his Persian home-base and a recalcitrant Egypt. Napoleon's famous appeal to the Jews to join him in "liberating Jerusalem" was probably modeled on Cyrus's call. The Jewish return from Babylon, then, was the result of a national movement aided by a great power.

When he depicts the vicissitudes of Babylonian Zionism, Asch in his present novel seems for a time to be reporting contemporary events, or events still within living memory. The acclaim, rejection, and re-embrace, followed by further rejection, that were the lot of the Second Isaiah, who believed in Cyrus's good intentions and was hopeful of the restoration of Judea under his rule, were also the lot of Herzl and Weizmann. The political divisions among the exiles likewise have their contemporary analogies. There were those who feared that agitation for a Return would lead to their forced expulsion from Babylon; those who argued that the Jewish genius would fulfill itself most richly in Babylon, and that the Return could only convert the Jews from a universal into provincial people; and finally the party which "knew that in Judea savage struggle awaited them with those who had encroached upon their borders and taken . . . their lands. . . ."

But halfway through his book the author jettisons this theme. The Second Isaiah suddenly moderates his Zionist enthusiasm, having come to believe that the Return presages greater suffering, and that only after the "man of sorrows" appears to act as scapegoat for all Israel and humanity can Redemption come. Asch draws upon Chapter 53 of Isaiah, which reads in part (in the translation used in *The Prophet*):

He is despised and rejected of men,
A man of sorrows. . . .
Surely he hath borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we did esteem him stricken,
Smitten of God and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions. . . .
And with his stripes we are healed. . . .
And Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . .

Jewish tradition has never found this passage any more obscure than similar prophetic texts, treating it as only another parable describing the transgressions for which the Jews were banished to Babylon, and stating the conditions for their eventual Redemption or Return. Christianity, however, has interpreted these verses not as a recall of the past, but a presentiment of the future—not as parable about the Jews, but a foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus. This view of a Messiah who by suffering atones for the sins of all mankind is rightly presented by Asch as a sweeping departure from Isaiah's —and, we might add, from all previous— prophecy. But he is wrong in thinking that the Jewish interpretation of the passage is without support from either history or tradition.

THE era with which the novel deals has not

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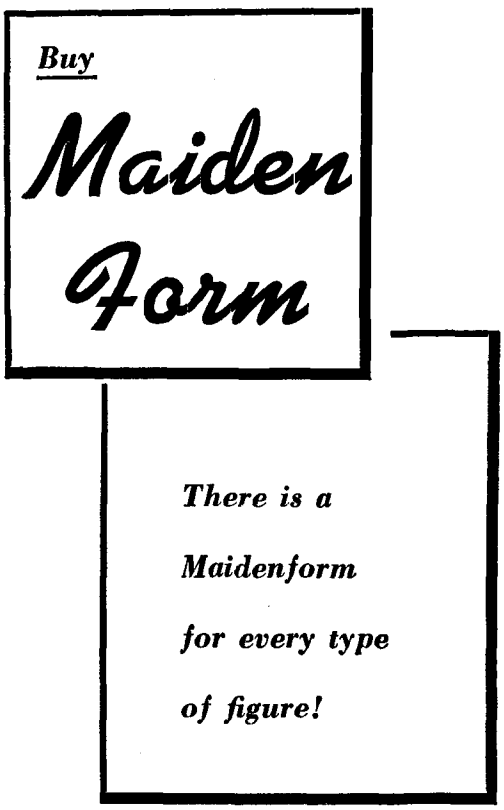
been unexplored by historians, and we know that it was only later, after the Return from Babylon, that apocalyptic literature (most of it ultimately relegated to apocryphal status) had its flowering among Jews, although the tendency is already apparent in Ezekiel. The Messianic movement related to this literature developed, however, only in the final stages of the Second Commonwealth, and its apocalyptic ideas, out of which grew Christian Messianism, were never accepted by more than a small minority.

The purpose and direction of Asch's strange theological meanderings are better understood by reading *The Nazarene*, *The Apostle*, and *Mary* along with *The Prophet*, which obviously serves as the prelude to the others. We can trace the pattern back to a remarkable early work, *Salvation* (*Der T'illim Yid*), which Jewish and other critics hailed as a perceptive study of Hasidism when it first appeared, for it seems to me that Asch's interest in Hasidism lies somewhere at the source of his Christological leanings. Hasidism in its extreme varieties teeters perilously on the Christological, as for example in the case of that morbid sect, the Bratzlaver Hasidim, who were also called the "dead Hasidim" because of their perverse adherence to the long deceased Rebbe Nachman of Bratzlav.

All in all, Asch's "theology" is an unhappy midway passage, a tragic pattern familiar at crucial junctures in Jewish history. The 17th century in East Europe, which serves as the setting of Bashevis's novel, was such a juncture. We are now living through another.



New View of American Reform

THE AGE OF REFORM: FROM BRYAN TO FDR. By RICHARD HOFSTADTER. Alfred A. Knopf. 328 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

NO SERVICE of the historian is more valuable, or less rewarded, than his helping us to identify and break up the stereotypes through which we have been seeing our past. It is a service, moreover, which the historian must often render indirectly, by influencing the ideas of other historians; he must first persuade his fellow scholars, and through them his views will eventually reach the public mind. Professor Hofstadter's book is in some ways an epoch-making reinterpretation of the Populist and Progressive eras in American political life. But because of its subtlety and originality, its hostility to cliché, *The Age of Reform* is unlikely to have the wide appeal of books that tell people what they already know or wish to believe.

During the New Deal era, it was customary for American "liberals" to look backward through American history and see a long straight corridor in which stood the heroes of American reform and revolt. FDR, of course, as the champion of the forgotten man dominated the foreground, with Wilson and his New Freedom just behind. Still further back came Teddy Roosevelt and the Progressives, and right behind them the Populists. Way down the corridor where the shadows of the past gather, the line trailed off with Lincoln, the Abolitionists, Jackson, and Jefferson. All these different figures were supposed to be, in something like the same sense, champions of the "little man," the "underdog," "minorities," or the "underprivileged" against the forces of lucre, power, and social status. Professor Hofstadter's volume forces us to realize how naive a conception this was. The truth may be that the gallery was an attempt to give the New Deal historical depth and respectability.

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In Professor Hofstadter's account, the various reform movements emerge not as a coherent series of tactical engagements forming the large strategy of a "liberal" or "reform" tradition, but rather as numerous disconnected battles fought for different, and sometimes conflicting, objectives. To put them all under a common banner of "reform" and "protest" was, then, to obscure the peculiarity of each. The circumstantial approach of the present volume thus reveals some distinctive features of American political life, and especially the atomistic character of our different protest movements.

PROFESSOR Hofstadter begins with the Populists of the 1890's, whom he describes as the heirs of "a larger trend of thought, stemming from the time of Andrew Jackson, and crystallizing after the Civil War in the Greenback, Granger, and anti-monopoly movements, that expressed the discontents of a great many farmers and businessmen with the economic changes of the nineteenth century." Populism was in large part a market phenomenon, rooted in the bewilderment of the farmers, who were suddenly discovering the complexities of their economic position. Their protest was "not . . . a product of the frontier inheritance, but . . . another episode in the well-established tradition of American entrepreneurial radicalism." The folklore of the movement contained strong apocalyptic and anti-Semitic elements. And the Populist spirit survived not in the New Deal but in the later "undercurrent of provincial resentment, popular and 'democratic' rebelliousness and suspiciousness, and nativism."

The Progressives, on the other hand, can only be understood as men who came of age during the depression of 1893-97. Unlike the farmer, they had suffered less in income than in status: "not through a shrinkage in their means but through the changed patterns in the distribution of deference and power." The Progressive ranks were swelled with groups which had possessed local eminence in the age before "nationwide sources of power and prestige" began to loom large. But where did they fit in the new gargantuan scheme of things? "Lawyers, physicians, professors, merchants were classes," Henry Adams wrote in describing the era before 1850, "and acted not as individuals, but as though they were clergymen and each profession were a church." These were the new déclassés, bereft of their local power and influence, a loss all the more difficult for them to take because their economic means had not declined at the same rate. But as they were in a position not to suffer this loss in silence, they protested loudly against the shift of power into the hands of political bosses whose strength came from the new urban immigrant masses, and who were naturally held up as symbols of "corruption." For the new immigrants interpreted political life in terms of personal relations, and not by the "rules-of-the-game." "The Progressive mind . . . was pre-eminently a Protestant mind. . . . The more the muckrakers acquainted the Protestant Yankee with what was going on around him, the more guilty and troubled he felt. The religious institutions of Protestantism provided no mechanism to process, drain off, and externalize the sense of guilt. American political traditions provided no strong native tradition of conservatism to reconcile men to evils that could not easily be disposed of."

After the Progressive protest, American life underwent a marked change. In the early years of this century a system of private welfare capitalism began to emerge; large-scale organizations—both of capital and labor—became an accepted fixture on the American scene. In the years following the First World War, move-

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ments of "reform" grew more and more diffuse and miscellaneous. Prohibition, while it had long been in the air, now "was a means by which the reforming energies of the country were transmuted into mere peevishness." The Ku Klux Klan (with a peak membership of around 4,000,000) was itself another expression of "reformist" malaise.

But the New Deal—characterized by Professor Hofstadter as "The New Opportunism"—was perhaps the most novel and decisive of recent political phenomena, precisely because it marked a reversal of the old roles of conservative and reformer. "During the New Deal . . . it was the reformers whose appeal to the urgent practical realities was most impressive. . . . It was the conservatives, on the other hand, who represented the greater moral indignation and rallied behind themselves the inspirational literature of American life." Utopianism, in that era, flourished in the usually unfertile soil of conservatism. Except for the writings of Thurman Arnold, Professor Hofstadter concludes, there was little articulate political theory in the New Deal that could speak to a later age.

WHAT is perhaps most remarkable about *The Age of Reform* is that it uses the methods of the sociologist and the social psychologist—in particular, the concept of status—to gain new insights into the American past, without losing the old insights of the humanist. Professor Hofstadter remains concerned with the predicament of individual, highly differentiated men. And his style is unaffected by both "disciplinary" and "interdisciplinary" jargon.

But while his work must cheer us about the present state of historical writing in this country, its implications for the future of our political thinking are by no means so clear. Professor Hofstadter's own technique, if applied to the present situation of quondam "liberals" of New Deal vintage, suggests some fresh questions.

During the two decades of New Deal-Fair Deal administrations, many of these liberals had a sense of sitting near (or even in) the seats of power. They had a novel status in American political life, of which they have recently felt deprived. Now the growing sophistication in interpreting American traditions of reform and protest—of which this book is a brilliant example—has deprived American "liberals" of their tradition by disintegrating it into heterogeneous fragments. Meanwhile a number of other writers have been laboring to construct a new tradition of "conservatism" which, in its sophisticated form, draws heavily on the literary and academic resources of the Western European past. Much "liberal" criticism of the "New Conservatism" is cast in the personal and slightly resentful language of people who dislike being reminded of their own sins.

For the "New Conservatism" itself is perhaps another effort to construct an American tradition from a useable (in this case primarily a European) past; much as the New Liberals of the Age of FDR patched together a tradition from the supposedly homogeneous past of American reforming movements. But the sins of the "New Conservatism"—whatever they may be—cannot whiten the sins of the old New Liberalism. What they both teach us is the need to face anew in the facts of our history the peculiar possibilities of American political life.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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By John Stuart Mill*

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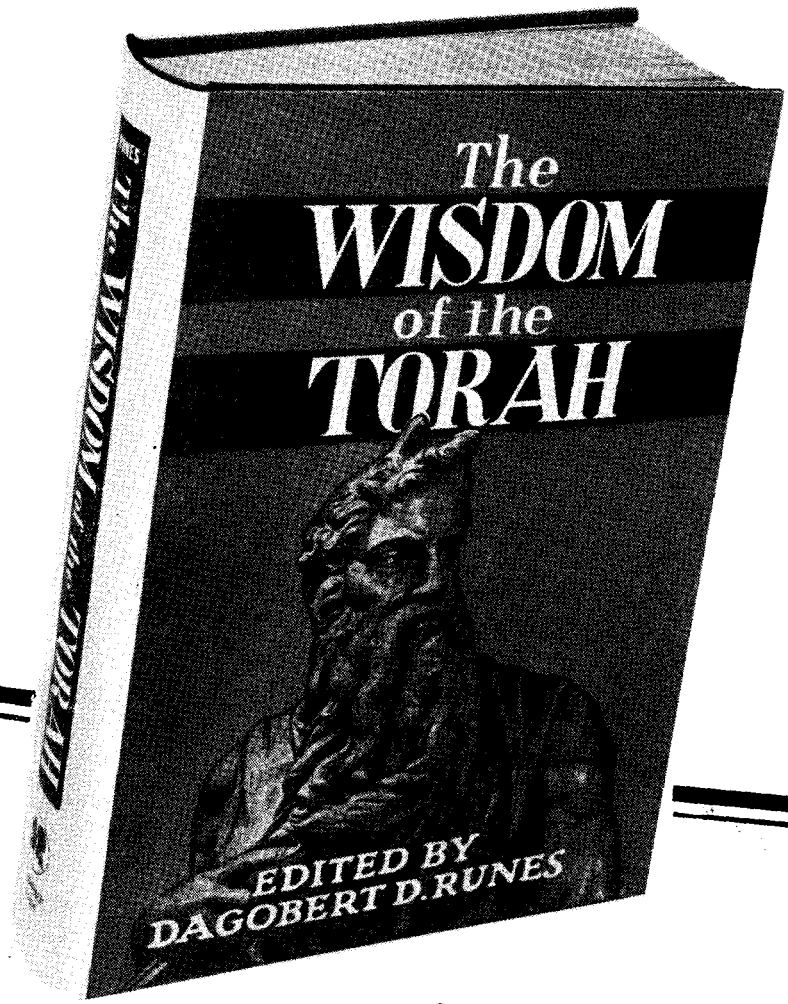

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